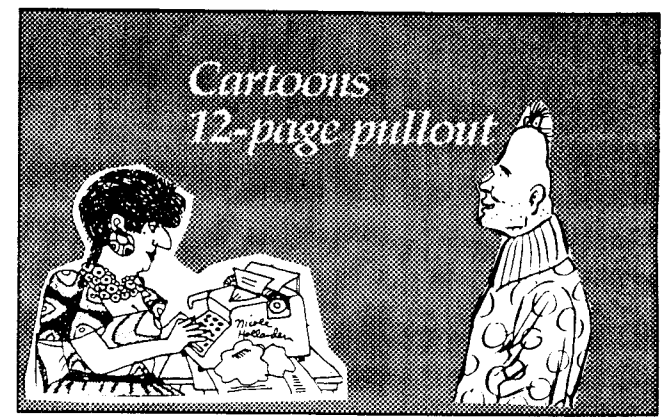




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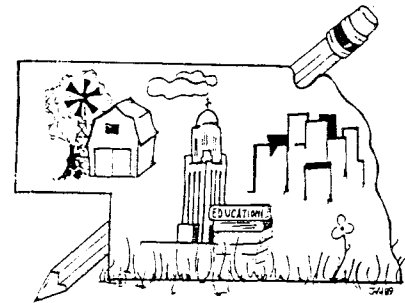
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Nebraska Observer

Vol. 7, No. 1, January 3, 1992



State Energy Officials Believe Conservation To Be a Viable Future Power Source Option

by Frances Mendenhall

It wasn't long ago that energy officials believed that energy consumption would always continue to increase and that it would always be necessary to plan for new plant construction to meet consumer demand.

Now, the operating concept is conservation. OPPD Director Michael O'Hara often speaks of demand-site management. Demand-site management is being practiced now, he says. The focus is on the peak commercial load, between nine a.m. and five p.m. In the last eight months OPPD has been giving away compact fluorescent light bulbs to its big commercial customers. Compact fluorescent bulbs are expensive to buy, ranging from \$9 to \$26. But they last 10 to 20 times as long as incandescents and use 3 percent of the electricity. (They use 10 percent of the electricity burned by a conventional fluorescent.)

Demand-site management, says O'Hara, is the first of three options that OPPD will take to meet consumers' needs. It is the most cost-effective. The second option is adding production capacity with small, natural gas burning combustion turbines. These units produce 50 megawatts each; OPPD plans to add eight such units beginning in 1995. The third option, which has the highest capital costs, is adding another coal-burning plant. Even though coal-burning plants have become much more economical with recent technological improvements (the Nebraska City plant was recently cited by Utility Data Institute as having the third lowest production cost in the nation among fossil- or nuclear-fueled generating stations), construction costs make adding a new plant less cost-effective than either demand-site management or combustion turbines.

Allison Meyer of the Nebraska Energy Office uses another term, "Integrated Resource Planning." Meyer, who was selected

by Governor Nelson to assist in formulating recommendations for a state energy plan, coordinated the efforts of a 52-member energy policy council comprised of a cross section of citizens. The council members were selected by the governor last April and have been meeting since then to arrive at their recommendations. Their final draft document was completed in December and sent to the governor's office; it will be available to the public in mid-January from the Energy Office. Meyer says the governor will announce his energy plan some time this summer, based on these recommendations.

Integrated Resource Planning

Integrated Resource Planning, IRP, was a main component of the document in the area of electricity, according to Meyer. IRP doesn't mean the same thing as conservation; rather it means considering costs and benefits of lowering demand along with costs and benefits of increased energy production. The most important time to lower demand is during peak hours; if this can be accomplished, the need for new construction is forestalled.

When the policy is approved by the governor, Meyer and her colleagues in the Energy Office will be the ones to coordinate it. One thing they have already implemented is a loan program called the Dollar and Energy Saving Loan Program, also known as the 5 Percent Program. This program provides low-interest loans for purchase of real estate which meets certain energy saving guidelines. Meyer says the program was expected to make 250 loans in its first year, but was immediately well-received and made 4,000 loans. "Unlike other programs," she says, "the lenders love it."

There are demonstrable positive economic spinoffs from conserving energy. One person who knows a lot about that is Iowan Wes Birdsall, of Osage, Iowa. Birdsall gave a

public presentation for interested Nebraskans early in 1991, and testified at a committee hearing for LB 576, which requires that applicants for construction of electrical facilities show a "demonstrated commitment to energy efficiency and energy conservation."

Birdsall is a manager of Osage Municipal Utilities Inc. Since 1980 he is credited with helping consumers in his community cut power usage an average of 10 percent per home. Birdsall took infrared aerial photos of every structure in Osage, revealing which buildings were losing heat. One building was the local hospital. When a new roof was installed there was a net savings of 20 percent of the previous year's heating bill.

Later Birdsall took ground-level infrared pictures of every house in town, and began giving away energy saving devices such as fluorescent light bulbs and insulating jackets for water heaters. Birdsall also believes in planting trees to cut the need for air conditioning. He bought a huge tree-planting machine for the local residents to use.

Birdsall and his staff helped a local manufacturer, Fox River Mills Inc., find ways to cut energy use. The factory raised its output by 30 percent in four years but spent less than one percent more in electricity.

The result has been that Osage Municipal hasn't had to build a new plant. Relieved of

the need for adding capacity and with newly implemented efficiencies, it gave rate cuts totalling 19 percent in a recent five-year period while use of appliances such as air conditioners had grown.

Even the local supermarket reports a remarkable benefit; by making energy saving improvements, Super Valu store owner Everett Steele was able to lower food prices enough to keep Osage people from going to nearby Mason City for their groceries.

Conservation Legislation

In the Nebraska Legislature, LB 576 has a chance of passing this session. Sponsored by Sen. Cudaback, it requires that applicants for construction of electrical facilities demonstrate a "commitment to energy efficiency and energy conservation." The bill made it out of committee with an amendment, and has been advanced to General File. Since it has been amended, it cannot be passed without debate. That and the fact that it at this time lacks a sponsor as a priority bill decrease the likelihood of passage.

Michael O'Hara has been promoting the bill. He believes that the bill will be amended to require Integrated Resource Planning. According to O'Hara, Nebraska is one of the few states that doesn't require Integrated Resource Planning.

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McCarthy: U.S. Should Turn Outward

By Colman McCarthy

WASHINGTON — At year's end, Americans are being told to turn inward. Politicians on the left and right deliver one-note, one-party messages: America First, we have enough problems at home, let's take care of our own. Sorry Haitians. Sorry Russians. Sorry everyone.

These simplifications, which join a mild form of isolationism with a severe case of national self-absorption, go up against a couple of facts that are less and less mentioned.

1. America has habitually put itself first. Among Western industrialized nations, we have consistently ranked last in non-military economic assistance to poor countries. In 1987, that aid equaled 0.24 percent of our GNP, a niggardly amount amounting to a smaller share than what we dispensed in 1919.

Had American leaders put their hearts into developmental aid, instead of their speeches, such programs as the Peace Corps would be well-funded by now. Yet after 30 years of success and more than 120,000 volunteers sent abroad, as well as having two and three times the number of qualified applicants it can accept, funding for the program is negligible. Former director Loret Ruppe routinely asks Congress why it chooses to spend more money on military marching bands than the Peace Corps.

2. We have problems at home but they are minor compared with what much of the world endures. During the 1980s, according to UNICEF's "State of the World's Children, 1992" that was issued last week, 250,000 children continue to die every week because of hunger or preventable diseases. The wars of the 1980s saw 1.5 million children killed, 4 million disabled, 5 million scattered to refugee camps and 12 million made homeless.

All of the wars of the United States in the past 45 years have been, conveniently, in the Third World. All were fought to protect what one president after another has called "our vital interests."

About those interests, that we consider so "vital," Luis Ignacio da Silva, a leader of the Brazilian Workers Party, had this thought in

1987, "I tell you that World War III has already started — a silent war, not for that reason any less sinister. This war is tearing down Brazil, Latin America, and practically all of the Third World. Instead of soldiers dying there are children. Instead of millions of wounded there are millions of unemployed. Instead of destruction of bridges there is the tearing down of factories, hospitals and entire economies. It is a war by the U.S. against the Latin American continent and the Third World. It is a war over the foreign debt, one which has as its main weapon, interest — a weapon more deadly than the atomic bomb."

This isn't a random anti-U.S. tirade. UNICEF estimates that the rich nations are receiving \$50 billion a year in interest on debts. In Latin America, incomes dropped by 10 percent in the 1980s.

3. Politicians who say, "Let's take care of our own," are right. But where is the analysis of the cause of our own's problems, and which leaders are offering solutions that amount to more than putting air into the tires of a slowing economy? The 1980s saw Congress allow two

trillion dollars to be spent on America's military might, with four quickie, pushover invasions — Grenada, Libya, Panama and Iraq. The result in the 1990s has been a two-trillion-dollar federal debt. For hollow military victories in one decade, there is crushing economic defeat in the next.

Some see it clearly. Bill Moyers, in a coming PBS documentary on "The New Economy," reports that "Americans are divided into two groups: one that works for a living and makes it, and one that works for a living and can't make it." An average of more than 2,500 U.S. workers are being laid off daily, with one in three finding new jobs that offer below poverty wages.

Instead of turning inward, America should be turning outward. We still have securities, blessings and riches that most of the earth's population will never know. By sharing this wealth with the full generosity that would be the mark of a moral country, we could help raise the world to our level and ensure that we remain there ourselves.

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Observer Deadlines

The next Nebraska Observer will be published January 29, 1992. Copy is due on or before January 23. Copy for the February 26, 1992 edition is due on or before February 20.

Nebraska's Property Tax Quandary

Progressivity, Broadened Base, Lower Rates Featured In Proposed State Tax System

The Center for Rural Affairs appointed a seven-person task force to examine Nebraska's tax structure. They produced the following proposals, which are a near-final draft.

The task force will complete its work Jan. 20. Comments are welcome until then.

Contact the Center for Rural Affairs, P.O. Box 405, Walthill, Neb., 68062

The task force included an attorney, an accountant, two farmers, a rancher, a church official, and two social workers. Three were from Omaha or Lincoln, four were from smaller communities.

Nebraska's Tax Crisis: An Opportunity For Reform

Nebraska's tax system has been thrown into chaos by recent court decisions that interpret the Nebraska constitution to require that all personal property be taxed. The legislature and Governor Ben Nelson have so far been unable to arrive at a permanent plan that resolves the legal and political dilemmas sur-

rounding the personal property tax crisis.

The Center believes that Nebraskans should seize the opportunity created by this crisis to rethink the entire state and local tax system. Our criticisms of this system are:

Despite progress in recent years, Nebraska still depends too heavily on the property tax — for 45 percent of all state and local revenue, especially schools.

Nebraska's overall tax system is too regressive, both because it depends too much on property and sales taxes, and because its income tax system does not ask the wealthy to carry their weight.

Nebraska's sales tax base is too narrow, exempting most of the rapidly growing service sector.

We have long believed that this issue has been unnecessarily divisive, pitting rural against urban parts of the state. We reject that division out of hand. For us, the issue is not whether agriculture as a sector, or residential property owners as a class, or urban businesses as a group pay more or less in taxes.

For us, the issue is that the tax system asks too much of those with too little to give, and not enough of those who have plenty — no matter their addresses or their occupations.

In 1987, some dissident businesses pushed through the legislature sweeping tax changes that granted them huge tax breaks and made the income tax system much more regressive, shifting the burden from the wealthy to the middle class, from expanding business to those struggling to survive, and from growing communities to those in trouble.

These changes, and the politically heavy handed means by which they were accomplished, worked to sour the civic climate of Nebraska. Because the wealthy refuse to pay their fair share, everyone else feels they should pay less as well. Our capacity to provide essential public services and to govern are at stake. Taxation is the most basic means by which the citizens of a democracy express their mutual commitments.

To address these concerns, the Center Board of Directors appointed a Tax Reform Task Force to study the state's tax system and propose a comprehensive reform. The Task Force has completed a draft of its work and is seeking comments from the general public before finalizing its report this month. This summary is offered to encourage citizens to comment on the Task Force's ideas.

Goals For Nebraska Tax Reform

The Task Force has proposed three broad goals for tax policy:

1. Reduce property tax collections by an average of 25 percent and reduce dependence on property taxes from 45 percent to 34 percent of total revenue.
2. Broaden the sales tax base and lower rates.
3. Make the overall tax system more progressive.

The Center Board of Directors approved these goals at its December meeting. Implementing them is now the issue. The Task Force's challenge has been to design a tax system that accomplishes these goals without changing the amount of total revenue the state expects to receive in 1992 from all state and local taxes—about \$2.7 billion.

Lower Sales And Property Tax Rates

The Task Force has produced a draft plan that consists of seven major proposals, which if adopted, will allow the following:

First, the property tax mill levy on real estate and motor vehicles can be lowered by 20 percent, from an average of .2309 to .1848.

Second, the sales tax rate on goods and services can be lowered from 5 percent to 4 percent.

And third, to make the sales tax slightly

more progressive, each person can be given a \$25 sales tax credit, which like the old food sales tax credit, will reduce your income tax obligation, or, if you don't pay income tax, will be paid directly to you.

This plan will produce a balanced and fair system for Nebraskans.

Seven Proposals For A Balanced And Fair Tax System For Nebraskans

1. Eliminate personal property taxes. Instead require taxpayers to add-back the amount deducted as personal property depreciation on their federal tax return to their Nebraska taxable income.

The personal property tax has been called a liar's tax because it involves self reporting and self assessment of property. Two proposals have been considered to replace it. The 3-R Committee — the governor's special study group — proposes to continue to tax personal property using a depreciation method to value it for tax purposes. A second approach, by Sen. Hall and others, would have placed a 3 percent surcharge on the amount of personal property depreciation a taxpayer deducts from his/her federal taxable income.

We propose instead to simply require the taxpayer to add-back the personal property deducted on the federal return to his/her Nebraska taxable income. The advantages:

- It eliminates the administratively complex personal property tax.

- It also eliminates a court challenge claiming the tax is an unconstitutional statewide property tax—we're simply changing the calculation for taxable income.

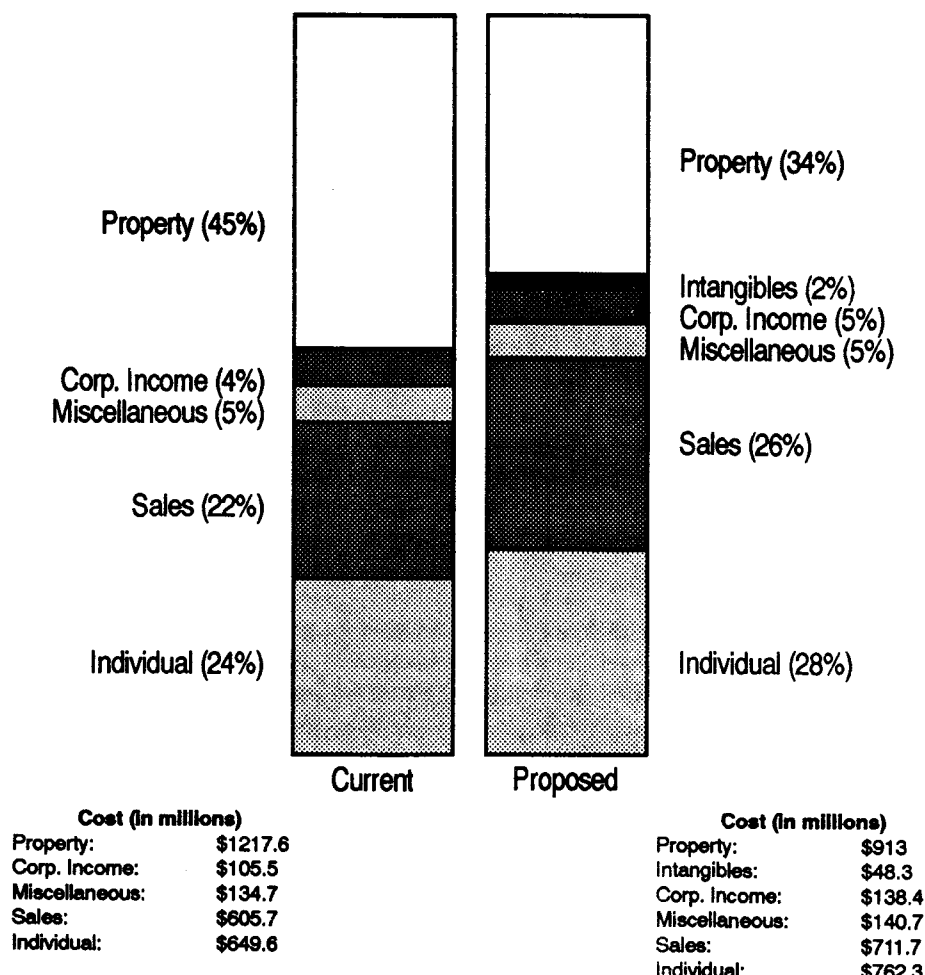
- The depreciation is taxed progressively as income rather than at the flat property tax rate or at the flat 3 percent surcharge. Small businesses and farmers in lower tax brackets won't pay as much as big business with higher incomes.

- It raises more money (\$63 million) than the surcharge (\$40 million), replacing two-thirds of the revenue lost by eliminating the personal property tax.

It runs counter to the taxpayer's incentive to maximize depreciation claimed on the federal tax return — the more you deduct on the federal return, the more you add-back on the Nebraska return. However, there will still be an incentive to claim depreciation.

Finally, to make the remaining real property tax a little less regressive, we propose a "circuit breaker" limiting taxes on a home owned and occupied by a person with below median income to 3.5 percent of that person's income. For renter house-holds with below

Summary of Changes in Relative Share of Tax Burden by Revenue Source



Ducks Lose, Developers Win With Quayle's Council on Competitiveness

by Kenneth Pins

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On July 10, Environmental Protection Agency administrator William Reilly was being driven to Capitol Hill to deliver a fresh definition for wetlands.

The new definition, prompted by complaints from farmers and others that rules formulated in 1989 went too far, was the result of long negotiations by the EPA and three other federal agencies that regulate wetlands.

On the way, his car phone rang. It was the White House. The deal was off.

Later that month, on July 29, a White House group called the Council on Competitiveness met to take up the wetlands issue in earnest.

Millions of Acres

By the time the Bush administration issued its proposed new wetlands manual two weeks later, a seemingly trivial change involving standing water had effectively removed millions of acres new defined as wetlands from federal protection.

What had happened, exactly?

Members of several committees in Congress would like to know the answer to that, and to other Council on Competitiveness deliberations, with dates and names attached.

They have subpoenaed records, asked White House officials to testify and tried every way they can think of to learn the inner workings of the Council on Competitiveness. They have run into the wall of executive privilege.

Wealthy Businessperson

With Vice President Dan Quayle as its chair and its daily operations directed by wealthy Indiana entrepreneur Allan Hubbard, the council is legally nobody's business but the president's.

In the minds of many Democrats, it is an off-the-books deregulator, a one-stop place for industry to change the regulations it finds burdensome, to do an end-run around the democratic process.

Besides the vice president, permanent members of the council are the White House chief of staff, the Office of Management and Budget director, the treasury secretary, the attorney general and the head of the Council of Economic Advisors.

Who Called the Shots

The Council on Competitiveness cannot legally rewrite regulations; that is the job of federal agencies, such as the EPA, with technical experts on their staffs. Nevertheless, the competitiveness council's spokesperson leaves

little doubt about who called the shots on the wetlands issue.

"It's fairly well established that the council had a very active role on the wetlands issue," said Jeff Nesbit, a spokesperson for the council.

"There was that very pivotal meeting (July 29), chaired by the vice president — the EPA administrator was there — where the basic policy decisions were made on the issue," he said.

Nesbit is in the delicate position of describing the council as effective (which enhances Quayle's reputation), without being too effective (which is against the law).

Costs to a Minimum

Technically, Nesbit said, the competitiveness council did not write the contents of the manual. However, Nesbit said, "It does review (rules) and make suggestions, yes." Its goal is to keep to a minimum the costs to the industries being regulated.

Established by executive order in 1990, the competitiveness council is new, but it belongs to an old tradition of White House task forces designed to pressure regulators outside the public eye.

"You take sections of the regulations and say, 'I think this ought to be rewritten, what do you think?'" said Jim Tozzi, a former staffer with the Office of Management and Budget who is credited by many as the originator of the practice.

"I knew a guy named Tozzi who used to rewrite them himself. It saves paperwork," Tozzi said dryly.

During the Reagan administration a similar group called the Regulatory Relief Task Force had as its chairman then-Vice President George Bush.

The Council on Competitiveness has been an especially activist incarnation of the idea.

Emits Toxins

It has influenced drug approval rules and offered up to 100 amendments to the Clean Air Act, some of which have the potential to help Hubbard, who owns stock in an Indiana utility and who owns a business that emits a small amount of toxins annually.

Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, and two other Senate Governmental Affairs Committee members have asked for records to indicate whether the council and executive director Hubbard have violated ethics rules.

"We do not know if Mr. Hubbard has a conflict of interests because we do not know what the Council on Competitiveness is doing," Glenn said.

As its role in the wetlands controversy

shows, there is little doubt the Council on Competitiveness wields enormous influence over what government regulates.

"Not Technically Valid"

The contents of the wetlands manual that finally came out of the White House — a manual that was criticized by the Corps of Engineers as "not technically valid" — suggests to many that it was not the work of scientists at the EPA who were familiar with the issue.

Wetlands — areas wet part of the year, dry others — are important for wildlife, flood prevention and for filtering nitrates out of farm runoff.

However, because they fall into the transition area between firm ground and rivers and streams, drawing a line around what is and what is not a wetland has long been a source of controversy, often pitting science against political reality.

The definition contained in a 1989 wetlands manual was criticized by farm groups and other business interests for covering too much ground, stopping development projects and preventing farmers from exercising their private property rights.

"We had a manual that said 'No, and if you don't like that answer, take me to court and I'll defend myself with your tax dollars,'" said Mark Maslyn of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

No Public Comment

The Farm Bureau made its concerns known in July 1989. "The vice president first heard some concerns about the new EPA definition then," Nesbit said. The Farm Bureau points out that the 1989 manual was adopted without public comment.

Scientists Call Quayle 'Arrogant' For Writing Wetlands Manual

The following is excerpted from an article about the wetlands entitled "High and Dry" in the Dec., 1991 Scientific American.

Many experts say the document is filled with inconsistencies and loopholes that could lead to the loss of designation for half the nation's remaining wetlands. The debate has

The White House Domestic Policy Council began looking into the issue early on, holding hearings around the country as the scientific debate over the 1989 wetlands regulations continued.

Last January Quayle spoke at the Farm Bureau's national convention in Phoenix, where he again met with its leaders, and the issue was discussed. "We worked with anybody we could, to the extent that we could," Maslyn said.

The Farm Bureau had succeeded in getting a 1990 guideline issued that removed 60 million acres of "prior converted croplands" — areas tilled and drained before 1985 — from federal regulation, a fact often overlooked in the current debate.

Coalition of Developers and the Farm Bureau

The Farm Bureau, working with a group of developers, oil and gas interests and others called the National Wetlands Coalition, continued to press its case, calling for a further relaxation of wetlands rules.

While EPA's Reilly, working with the other agencies with wetlands authority — the Corps of Engineers, the Soil Conservation Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service — was moving toward a July 10 compromise, the

Continued on following page



Winterizing the Cat, Visiting Yugoslavia, And Choosing the Right Lane in Life



Dear Lulu:

Harry and I always have trouble when the weather turns bad because he leaves the hoses out to freeze and we forget to cover the roses. We don't fill the bird feeder and we forget to put our pink flamingoes away and we don't put antifreeze in until the car stops dead, and Harry forgot to winterize the cat so she froze up and refused to use her box and things were not in good shape. So tell your dear readers the solution. We are going to Arizona.

Love, Done in Dunning

Dear Done:

Ah, Arizona. God's waiting room, where you go to shop and die. Send your cat over. She sounds like she needs the care only a wait-it-out Nebraskan can give.

Love, Lulu

Dear Lulu:

I am thrilled that President Bush is sending \$100 million, leftover Persian Gulf food and the Peace Corps folks to help the homeless. What wonderful people these Republicans are!

Love, Worried-About-The-Homeless in Waterloo

Dear Worried:

The money and help is going all right but it's Russia's homeless that get it, not ours. Who would have dreamed that a Republican would want to clothe a Communist! Ronald Reagan would roll over in his grave if he were dead, which he is, cranially speaking.

Love, Lulu

Dear Lulu:

I'm a real Robert Fulgham nut and I just

bought his latest book, "Uh-Oh: Some Observations From Both Sides of the Refrigerator Door" for \$19. I just loved his first book, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," and then when "It Was on Fire When I Lay Down On It" came out -- well, I was just in heaven. Isn't he just wonderful? How could anyone not love this stuff? It just makes one dreamy, sort of like I'm in the Crystal Cathedral.

Love, Dreamy in Deshler

Dear Dreamy:

If you like Rev. Fulgham's prose, you'll love his next work, "They Were Road Apples When I Lay Down on Them, But They Turned to Squash When I Sat Up," to be followed by "If It's Ripe It Must Be caca. He's sort of in a rut.

And, of course, speaking of Crystal Cathedral, you're obviously a Robert H. Schuller fan, with his latest Protestant epic, "Life's Not Fair But God is Good." This is the first in a three part series on John Wesley, to be followed by "Life Stinks and So Do You," and then ending with his triumphant "God's A Woman and I Like Lace." Happy Reading.

Love, Lulu

Dear Lulu:

I suppose I've wanted to crawl back into childhood for many reasons. Things seemed so simple then. Americans were the good guys and whoever was against us was bad. No dating; no complex relationships. Well, for example, the other day I pulled up to an intersection with a red light. Two lanes. And just beyond the red light the two lanes become one. But I didn't know if it was merge to the right or merge to the left. So I may be in the best lane to beat the other guy, or the worst lane. Why don't they tell you in advance where to get to, to beat the other guy? I hate it when they don't tell you how to get ahead in the lanes or life or whatever. Please tell your readers.

Love, Pondering in Papillion

Dear Pondering:

Thank you, Frederick W. Nietzsche. We'll pass the thought on to Robert Schuller for his new book, "How to choose the right lane in life."

Love, Lulu

Dear Lulu:

I won a trip to Europe from our local co-op and I'm scared to death. I've never met any foreigners before! I guess I'm wondering if I'll see any other Nebraskans over there and how will I recognize them? It would be so much fun to see somebody from home while I'm away from home.

Love, Pete from Prague

Dear Pete:

There are lots of ways to spot Cornhuskers away from their roots. Corn seed caps and Herbie Husker buttons are two sure signs. You can also ask them if they've ever used lard in bed or if their mother keeps a spit cup next to her tractor seat. Hope these hints help to spot those Cornhuskers.

Love, Lulu

P.S. Be sure to plan a side trip to Yugoslavia.

Wetlands , from previous page

competitiveness council went further.

So far, in fact, that under the proposed manual issued after that July 29 meeting, more than 100,000 acres of the Florida Everglades, and other areas valuable to ducks and developers alike, would no longer be protected.

While the Farm Bureau worked with the council to change wetlands regulations, it was stating publicly that the regulation changes were no big deal.

The top story in the Nov. 18 Farm Bureau News carried the headline: "Changes in manual won't cause wetlands losses." The article made a distinction between what it called "true wetlands" and "paper wetlands."

Discussion Forbidden

Field tests conducted by government regulators indicated a very different conclusion, but the EPA and the other federal agencies involved were forbidden by the Bush administration from discussing them.

The summary reports of those tests, written by the Corps of Engineers, were later leaked and showed substantial losses of current wet-

lands, with up to 70 percent of wetlands in Iowa and Illinois dropping out of federal regulation.

Maslyn said he doesn't believe those test results. "We're not talking about something that is precise" he said.

The proposed new guidelines have generated more than 30,000 letters from the public in response, EPA official Jane Freeman said. The results of the field tests are now available from the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers field offices.

The public comment period has been extended to Jan. 21.

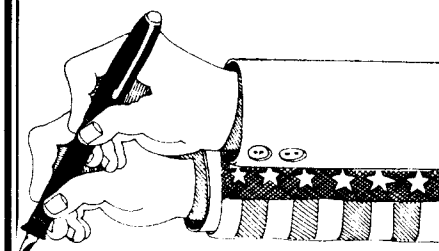
The gag orders, leaks, conflicting claims and last-minute calls on car phones show a bitter split within the administration of President Bush, who said there would be "no net loss" of wetlands during his presidency.

The Council on Competitiveness, say its critics, is the way to cut through all of that.

A final decision should be announced early in 1992.

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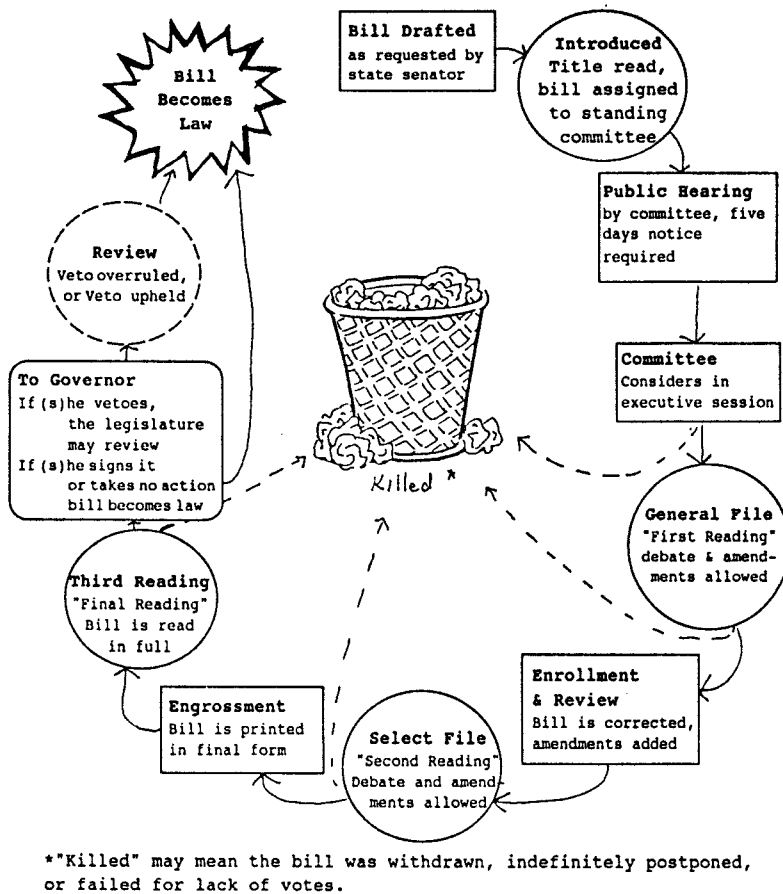
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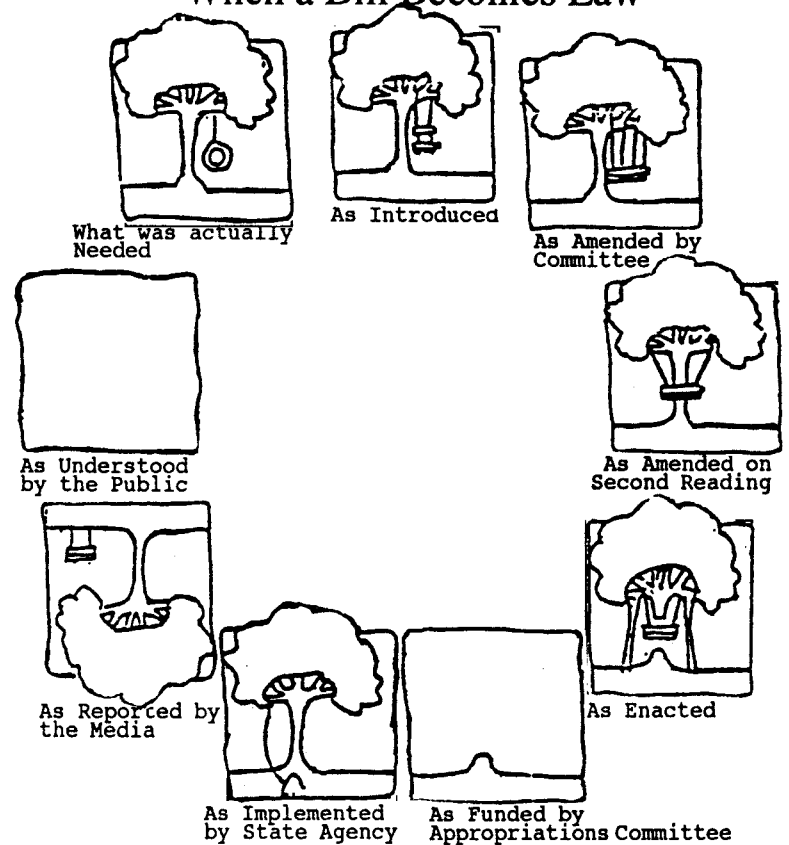
President George Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500



How a Bill Becomes Law in Nebraska



What Really Happens When a Bill Becomes Law



Continued from page 3

median income, who really pay property taxes indirectly, we propose a refundable property tax credit of \$50. Neither of these proposals has been analyzed for their revenue impact.

2. Place a 1.5 percent surcharge on unearned income from intangible property, with a \$10,000 exemption for each natural person.

Intangible property (stocks, bonds, savings accounts) isn't taxed like other income producing property that is tangible like farmland, largely because it is difficult to find and assess this property. But it is possible to place an additional surcharge on income from this property, since it must be reported on the federal tax return.

To protect those on fixed incomes who live on these funds or farmers who temporarily invest federal farm program payments in certificates of deposit until they use the funds for planting next year's crops, we propose an exemption on the first \$10,000 of income from intangibles each year. A

1.5 percent surcharge on income from intangibles with a \$10,000 exemption would raise \$48.3 million, and two thirds of that would come from corporations.

3. Lower sales tax rates to 4% but broaden the base. Place a sales tax on services, with exemptions for health and education expenditures.

Nearly half the potential sales tax base on Nebraska is exempt because the state generally does not tax services — except services widely consumed by middle and low-income people, such as all public utility services, sports and entertainment tickets, and cable TV service. The service sector is big, and it is growing. It is senseless to leave it off the sales

tax rolls. The only exceptions we propose are for medical expenses (why tax misfortune?) and for tuition (investing in education is a public service). This would add about \$6.1 billion to the sales tax base, enabling us to lower the sales tax rate.

We also propose sales taxes on pesticides as pollutants in order to discourage overuse and encourage a shift to sustainable agriculture. About \$160 million worth of pesticides are sold in Nebraska. At the lower sales tax rate of 4 percent, that would raise about \$6.4 million.

4. Place a 1 percent transaction tax on real estate purchases with \$100,000 lifetime exemptions for each natural person on each of two categories: (1) owner-occupied residential real estate, and (2) owner-operated farm/business real estate.

It's like points charged on a mortgage — this tax will be paid primarily by the seller, not the buyer, because, like points added to a mortgage by finance companies, the tax will typically just reduce the amount of principal the buyer is able to pay the seller. At least that's how savvy buyers will operate. In actuality, the buyer and seller will probably negotiate some sharing of this tax, just as they frequently do with points on a mortgage.

Giving exemptions for limited amounts of owner-occupied homes and owner-operated farm/business will also give first time buyers and those with limited assets an advantage in the market.

It's hard to estimate the revenue because there isn't much data on these transactions. We estimate at least \$26 million. But because of the uncertainty, we have not included this revenue in our final analysis.

5. Add four new tax brackets for persons with income above \$100,000 with marginal rates graduating from 8.07 percent to 9.8 percent (for those with income above \$1,000,000).

Nebraska's income tax system became considerably less progressive in 1986 when we decoupled from the federal system. Our proposal would restore progressivity to the system by adding four new brackets.

Ninety-eight percent of Nebraska taxpayers would see no increase under this system. Only those with net taxable incomes of over \$500,000 would be paying significantly more than they would have been paying to Nebraska if the state had remained coupled to the federal tax system, and no one would be paying a greater share of their income to the state than they were prior to the federal and state tax reforms of 1986 and 1987. And even for those with incomes over \$1,000,000, the tax rate would be less than Iowa's, which taxes all income above \$47,700 at 9.98 percent. Revenue gain: \$29 million.

We also recommend repealing a provision adopted in 1987 (LB 775) that exempts from income tax any capital gain received on stock in a Nebraska company that employed you. Ninety percent of the benefits of this provision in 1989 were received by 48 taxpayers with incomes over \$500,000 who escaped about \$5.4 million in state income taxes as a result.

6. Add a third corporate tax bracket for corporations with taxable income over \$1,000,000. Restore the three-part formula for calculating corporate taxable income. Increase rates across-the-board by 1.5 percent.

Nebraska corporations pay 7 percent less

tax (after adjustment for inflation) than they did in 1980, due partly to the lavish business tax credits passed in 1987 (LB 775), the full impact of which have not yet been fully felt. Moreover, corporate income taxes will fall even more in the years ahead as they take advantage of the new formula for calculating taxable income based only on the share of the company's sales that occur in Nebraska (ignoring how much of their income they earn here, and how much of their property is located here).

The tax corporations do pay is very "flat". There are only two brackets. Those below \$50,000 in taxable income pay 5.58 percent, all those above pay 7.81 percent. As a result, about 200 companies that earned over \$1,000,000 in 1988 and received 57 percent of all corporate profits paid only 60 percent of all corporate income tax — that's not a progressive tax at all.

We propose three reforms:

Add a third bracket for corporations that earn over \$1,000,000, and establish its rate initially at 8.93 percent. Then restore the three-part system for calculating taxable income (based on their sales, income, and property in Nebraska). Then raise all corporate income tax rates by 15 percent. The top rate on those with profits over \$1,000,000 would then be 10.27 percent, still well under Iowa's top rate, which is 12 percent for all corporations with over \$250,000 in taxable income. Revenue gain: \$32.9 million.

7. Increase alcohol and tobacco taxes by 10 percent.

This will raise an additional \$5.3 million needed to meet the total revenue requirements.

Doonesbury's Quayle Story Broke Media Blackout

"The problem with cartoons," New York Times editor Max Frankel complained (Newsday, 11/4/91), "is that you can't edit them."

That may explain why the Times doesn't run comic strips. But almost every other daily in the country does. And in November, editors at a score of newspapers responded to the edit-resistant nature of cartoons by suspending publication of Doonesbury for three weeks—the duration of an episode in Garry Trudeau's comic strip depicting a government cover-up of charges that Dan Quayle used illegal drugs.

The series caused a media uproar. In a typical commentary, Thomas Oliphant charged (Boston Globe, 11/13/91) that "Quayle has been slandered by a comic strip" and "the press has compounded the slander by treating it as news."

The two percent of newspapers opting for censorship included some large dailies. "It's too much a blurring of fact, fiction and diatribe," said John W. Walter Jr., managing editor of the Atlanta Journal and Constitution. Some newspapers printed disclaimers alongside Doonesbury. Perhaps the most bizarre appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle for the last few days of the episode: "So far as the Chronicle knows, Garry Trudeau, the creator of the cartoon 'Doonesbury,' has never asked Dan Quayle for an interview."

Doonesbury's critics missed a key point: In a couple of weeks, Garry Trudeau broke a three-year media logjam that had blocked any serious attention to federal prisoner Brett Kimberlin (See EXTRA!, Jul/Aug '90.) Preferring to dump on Doonesbury, the U.S. mass media failed to acknowledge their own past failure to cover the Kimberlin story.

During the final days of the 1988 campaign, Bush-Quayle strategists kept close tabs on Kimberlin, who claimed to have been Quayle's pot dealer in the early '70s. Staying in frequent contact with the U.S. Justice Department (which runs the federal prison system), aides to Bush and Quayle repeatedly briefed top campaign officials like James Baker III and Lee Atwater.

The warden of the penitentiary in Oklahoma, where Kimberlin was an inmate at the time, had okayed a news conference at the prison on the Friday night before the national elections. But that evening—in an unprecedented order from Washington—Bureau of Prisons director J. Michael Quinlan canceled the news conference and had Kimberlin placed in solitary confinement.

In spite of evidence of top Bush-Quayle campaign officials' partisan manipulation of the federal prison system, the Kimberlin story was ignored or discounted by mass media.

New York Times reporter Michael Wines wrote an article (12/29/88) that managed to ignore central aspects of the story. Wines told Martin A. Lee and Norman Solomon, co-authors of the book *Unreliable Sources*: "I did manage to confirm the fact that they (Bush-Quayle campaign officials) were kept abreast

of what this guy was doing. At which point I asked myself—'Okay, what's wrong with that?' After checking with some official sources—though not with Kimberlin—Wines said he decided that the prisoner was a "publicity hound."

It wasn't until the Trudeau comic strips in November 1991 that most mass media began to take a look at the story—though debunking Doonesbury seemed to be priority.

Many news accounts focused, not on Kimberlin, but on a cocaine dealer said to have failed a lie detector test when claiming that he sold coke to Quayle. Ironically, after Kimberlin volunteered to undergo a polygraph test about his claim, Knight Ridder news service sought to take him up on the offer, almost three years ago—but federal prison authorities refused to allow it. That refusal went unreported.

Other articles and disclaimers repeated the official DEA line that the agency had investi-

gated, and then dismissed as untrue, allegations of cocaine use by Quayle. Usually unmentioned was the fact that an assistant U.S. attorney in Indiana asked the Justice Department in 1982 to do a sting against then-Sen. Quayle (Newsweek, 11/16/91). Former DEA agent Michael Levine cautioned EXTRA! that the claim by the highly politicized agency to have disproved a charge means little: "I've seen them say that many times and do nothing," he said.

With the notable exception of a belated article by Washington Post staffer Michael Isikoff (11/19/91), Kimberlin was the subject of little fair reportage outside the Doonesbury strip. A lengthy, one-sided article by Los Angeles Times reporter Douglas Frantz (11/7/91) said that Kimberlin "is not scheduled for release under normal regulations until 1994." But Kimberlin's parole situation is quite abnormal. He could have been out as early as 1984. But last year, the presidentially ap-

pointed U.S. Parole Commission decided to keep him locked up until February 1994. The 180 months of incarceration would be twice the maximum time recommended in federal guidelines (64-92 months for a prisoner in his category).

Doonesbury's fictional Washington Post reporter, Rick Redfern, asked a feathery Dan Quayle on November 27; "Sir, do you think there's any connection between Kimberlin's allegations about you and how he's been treated by the Parole Commission?" The fictitious Redfern was a good deal more intrepid than most real-life counterparts. In this case, journalism would do well to imitate art.

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Chicago's Superior Public Access TV



At a recent meeting of the Midwest Regional Board of Directors of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, NFLCP, a lot of time was spent going over the problems Public Access users face in Omaha. They couldn't believe what they were hearing, stories such as the following bit of bureaucratic torment.

Torment

Rod Austin, the assistant to the City Council, called my friend and fellow Public Access user Richard Hudlin and told him that the Cable Television Advisory Committee (CTAC) would address concerns expressed in his Nov. 29 letter to Walt Nabity, the Chairman of the CTAC, at the Dec. 9 CTAC meeting. Both Mr. Hudlin and I attended.

Mr. Hudlin pointed out that he was denied the use of his computer in the Public Access studio, told not to copy from 1/2" to 3/4" videotape and vice versa, and that his production time and editing time were, once again, arbitrarily and capriciously limited. Also, he pointed out that he was told he could only use the editing facility before he produced his shows. Relevant to that, I pointed out that I was told I could only take an editing workshop during normal working hours and that when I did make an appointment for an editing work-

shop during normal working hours the workshop was not completed due to, what I was told was, lack of time. However, the only item discussed was the issue of copying from 1/2" to 3/4" videotape and vice versa.

Mr. Kohler, the Communications Manager for Cox Cable, attempted to defend the denial of this procedure by alleging that a rewiring problem results from this. Mr. Hudlin stated that he could demonstrate that there is no rewiring problem. Moreover, Mr. Hudlin pointed out in his letter to Mr. Nabity that Mr. Kohler's rationale for disallowing copying from 1/2" to 3/4" videotape and vice versa is absurd since the time base corrector that Mr. Kohler previously asserted did not exist did in fact exist. As Mr. Hudlin pointed out, it was a Cox employee who told him about it.

Mr. Kohler admitted that he may be wrong on this matter and that he would consult with Cox' engineers. Mr. Nabity asked John Pierce, a member of the CTAC to get together with Mr. Kohler and Mr. Hudlin to investigate this matter and arrange for Mr. Hudlin to demonstrate the ease and simplicity of this procedure.

Why should Mr. Hudlin have to demonstrate something to Mr. Kohler that Cox' technical staff should already know how to do and in fact does know how to do as is evident by the fact that it was a Cox employee who demonstrated to Mr. Hudlin how to do what Mr. Hudlin is going to demonstrate to Mr. Kohler? This is absurd.

It is significant to note that on Sept. 3, I wrote a letter to Mr. Kohler asking him the very same question Mr. Hudlin later asked: why can't we copy from 1/2" to 3/4" videotape and vice versa? The question was referred to Mr. Kohler. On Oct. 1 Mr. Kohler said he would have an answer in 15 days. On Oct. 28 I sent another letter to Mr. Nabity pointing out that Mr. Kohler did not answer the question. I

received no response. On Nov. 29 Mr. Hudlin sent his letter asking the same question. He was invited to the Dec. 9 CTAC meeting to discuss this issue and Mr. Kohler gave the same answer: We'll have our engineers look into it. What sort of shell game is this?

Double Standard

Mr. Hudlin repeatedly stated that he wanted to produce a "quality show." In response to that, towards the end of the meeting, Mr. Nabity told Mr. Hudlin that Public Access is not intended for people to produce professional quality shows and that if they caught him using the Public Access facilities to make a profit, they would have to take action against him.

What a curious thing to say. I always thought the Public Access facilities were intended to be used to produce whatever kind of show the user wanted, be it of professional quality or down right trashy.

Furthermore, why should Mr. Hudlin's desire to produce a high quality show be suspect? I should think it would be applauded and encouraged. Public Access administrators in other cities, Chicago for one, encourage good work; here they throw up roadblocks!

Chicago's Public Access system is an excellent example of what can be done. People there are trained at the professional level and even leave Public Access and get professional jobs with local television networks.

So, why is Chicago's Public Access system so much better than Omaha's? One major reason is because it is owned and run by the Public Access users themselves. They have formed a non-profit organization to run it. Omaha can do the same thing. In fact, nothing short of that will solve the problem's facing Omaha Public Access users.

The Omaha chapter of the NFLCP meets Jan. 18, noon at W.Dale Clark Library

Sculptor's Compassionate Vision Invites Reflection

by Mary Day

The author is an artist and an instructor of art at Metropolitan Community College.

The current exhibition at The Antiquarium Gallery will generate much interest among the socially conscious and spiritually minded. This retrospective of drawings, paintings and sculpture by Bill Farmer presents the viewer with much to contemplate and consider.

Highlighting the show are bronze sculptures completed last summer at Farmer's foundry in Ashland, Nebraska. "The idea of taking wax in the hot summer sun and working these things...they would collapse under my fingers. I wanted to be surprised myself, to see what would come out."

Concentrating on the bronzes of 1991, one can decipher a direction which speaks of a compassionate vision. Formal considerations of balance and weight, mass and void, concave and convex integrate themselves in a natural extension of Farmer's understanding of his materials. The meaning in most of these forms delivers itself to the viewer holistically.

Three forms "Ground Spirit called Earth," "Dirt, the Earth Spirit," and "The Father, the Embrace of Silence" are located on the lower level of the Antiquarium's gallery. The taller-than-wide proportions of these forms create cylinders which would pull the viewer around them in a 360-degree circle, but the placement on pedestals next to the wall prevents these pieces from being fully experienced in the round. There is a challenge in wondering about the hollow in each cylinder; a space which is now contained by the meaning inscribed in the cylinder. "The Father, the Embrace of Silence" tells of a space which is "protected" by this form's armor of strips. "Dirt, the Earth Spirit" tells of a space which is "honored" with this form's copper body and bronze crown, and "Ground Spirit called Earth" of a space which is "revered," with its subtle forms and reference to front and back.

Also on this floor is "The Ascension," an interesting collage of materials which serves to remind us that the key to the ascension is the Cross. The contrast of materials is intriguing, yet the literalness of the message takes precedence over any visual summing of the parts.

Proceeding upstairs, we come upon "The Resurrection." The small scale inversely amplifies this piece's meaning. There is a satisfying tension created between the figure raising himself and then elevating the earth. The handling of material directly communicates the pulling and tugging of struggle. As we metaphorically witness Christ's struggle, we have the possibility of knowing our own, and knowing we are not alone.

It is in this ability to communicate empathy we find Bill Farmer at his best. "The Wreck called World" is an exceptional example. Its lumpy form tells of the love of its making. The balance of concave and convex spaces inform the viewer's sensibility. Dense in its containment, "The Wreck called World" exudes a presence and spaciousness. The form is its content.

Pieces such as "I wrestled my Angel Day after Day, Never Knowing..." and "Faces of Anguish, They both realized 'they' were going to kill him" tell of Farmer's concern

for the oppressed, and all the oppressors. The questions of conscience to which these pieces lead us include what is life about, and what can free will mean? Farmer says, "If it's spiritual and religious at the same time, there may be something to it."

On a paper cabinet upstairs are five more sculptures from this past summer. Among this group is "Mary, The First Cosmonaut," a little face set in a bulky bronze figure suspended against a thin backing of stainless steel. The bronze itself repeats concave depressions to create a rhythm and movement for the eye. She seems to hold hope as her face forms to peer out at us.

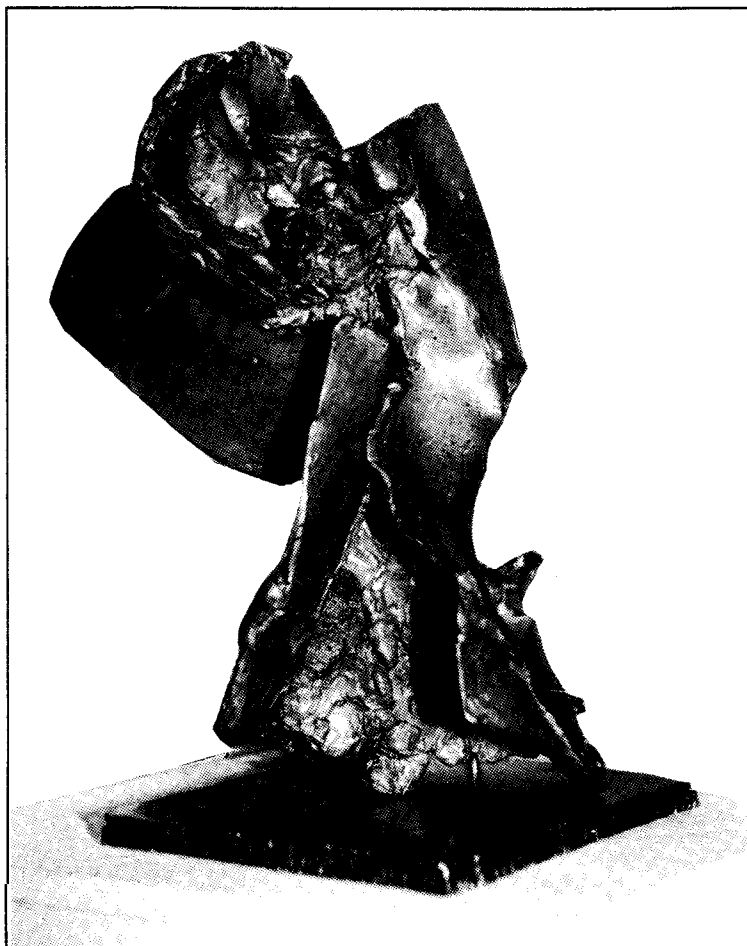
The remaining sculptures Farmer completed this summer are among a larger group of earlier pieces. "Flight at Rest" and "Bird at Rest" seem to work together. "Don't Kill my Children" reveals two figures, one standing and one kneeling, and calls to mind the drama of sorrow and forgiveness found in the story of the return of the prodigal son. "Dialogue" has two forms balanced, and tells of the complementary relationship of give and take. "The Spirit Comforter" is a hooded form gently holding a mystery, posing a question, rather than providing an answer.

Bill Farmer provides us with a window to a world of contemplation and wonder. As viewers we are challenged to engage our senses, and meditate upon this mystery which he helps make visible to us.

Farmer's retrospective continues at the Antiquarium through January 15, 1992.



The wreck called World"



"I wrestled my Angel Day after Day, Never Knowing..."



Dirt, the Earth Spirit

**Prof reader
needed**

**The Nebraska
Observer needs
typists January
24 and 25 and
proof readers
January 27 and
28. Mark your
calendar. Call a
few days ahead
of time.**

Congress Clarifies, Corrects 1990 Farm Bill Conservation Provisions

from the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

In response to widespread complaints from farmers and sustainable agriculture organizations, Congress approved measures that clarify and correct a number of conservation provisions in the 1990 Farm Bill. The language passed in the closing hours before the Thanksgiving recess as a part of a bill making technical corrections to the 1990 legislation.

The corrections were necessary to clarify Congress' Farm Bill directives to the US Department of Agriculture, which administers the programs. Farmer participation in a number of conservation programs was thwarted this year by USDA's misinterpretation of the law and lack of program information and training at the county level.

IFMPO Clarified

The bill clarifies several disputed aspects of the Integrated Farm Management Program Option (IFMPO), a voluntary farm program flexibility option designed to help farmers establish diversified crop rotations and meet conservation goals by reducing program penalties assessed against sustainable practices. The IFMPO enables farmers to improve resource stewardship by providing farm program payments on conserving crops and by allowing some harvesting on set-aside acres.

"The corrections and clarifications to the Farm Bill should put to rest the major difficulties farmers have faced with IFMPO program rules," said Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Washington representative Ferd Hoefner. "We are now quite hopeful that the Department of Agriculture will become more active in implementing the intent of Congress and encouraging farmers to use this important sustainable agriculture option."

The new bill specifies that up to 5 million acres may be enrolled in the program each year, with an overall goal of 15 to 25 million acres by 1995. The administration had interpreted the 1990 law as allowing only 1 million acres per year to be enrolled.

The amendments also specify that farmers with "traditionally underplanted acres" — land that remains as part of program crop base acreage while being planted to non-program crops, but is ineligible for payment — may assign these acres to their "triple base" or "normal flex acres." This clarification assures farmers participating in IFMPO that they will not lose payments available to non-participants in similar circumstances. The administration had interpreted the 1990 law to require that IFMPO farmers be doubly penalized by losing payments on underplanted acres as well as on triple base acres.

Congress also clarified its intent that legumes and grasses used as conserving crops in IFMPO may be harvested for seed from both payment acres and set-aside acres. The lan-

guage also makes clear that existing stands of conserving crops may be entered into IFMPO without requiring plow down and replanting. In both cases, the administration had misinterpreted the 1990 law to, in most instances, not allow these practices.

"Maximum flexibility has been restored to the IFMPO," said Juliet Tomkins, attorney with the Farmers Legal Action Group who has worked closely with farmers attempting to enroll in the IFMPO. According to Tomkins, the next urgent issue is to get the program and its practical uses better known in the county ASCS, SCS, and Extension offices. "One of the biggest problems in last year's sign-up was ignorance of the program on the part of county and state office staff," Tomkins said. "If the Department now moves quickly to improve training and clarify rules, the process should be much less frustrating for farmers this time around."

Despite the confusion over IFMPO rules and the low profile given the program by USDA, 56,000 acres were nonetheless enrolled in the program in 1991. Sign-up for 1992 extends from February 10 through April 17.

CRP Option Improved

The technical corrections bill also improves new options related to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The 1990 Farm Bill allows farmers to enter contour grass strips and grass waterways into the CRP without enrolling the entire field. Grazing is allowed if it is incidental to the gleaning of crop residues on the surrounding field. In those cases, a modest payment reduction may be required. The technical correction specifies that such grazing may occur anytime after the harvest of the grain crop on the surrounding field.

"Extensive enrollment of grass strips and waterways, as well as filterstrips, windbreaks, and shelterbelts, will ensure that the remaining acres eligible for CRP will produce the maximum conservation bang for the buck," said Hoefner. "The addition of more attractive grazing allowances should encourage greater enrollment in these special CRP uses."

FmHA Soil and Water Loan Program Replaced

Elsewhere in the bill, Congress reestablishes its intent that the major revision of the Farmers Home Administration's Soil and Water Loan Program incorporated into last year's Farm Bill replaces the existing program. Soil and Water Program loans are available in amounts up to \$50,000 to FmHA-eligible borrowers who need financing to implement sustainable agriculture or other conservation and water quality practices. Congress has appropriated \$5.5 million in loan funds for

Fiscal Year 1992.

The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, a group of a dozen midwestern organizations working to advance sustainable Agriculture policy, spearheaded the efforts to pass these provisions (among others) into the 1990 Farm Bill and to amend them in this year's technical corrections bill.

If you would like to speak with farmers who enrolled in the IFMPO in 1991 or who wanted to use the program but were discouraged from doing so, call Marta Cleaveland at 202-547-5754 for names and numbers.

Sustainable Options Hotline

A national Sustainable Options Hotline is being started by the Center for Rural Affairs to assist farmers and ranchers who want to take advantage of the new sustainable farm program options enacted in the 1990 Farm Bill.

The Sustainable Options Hotline number is 402-846-5428.

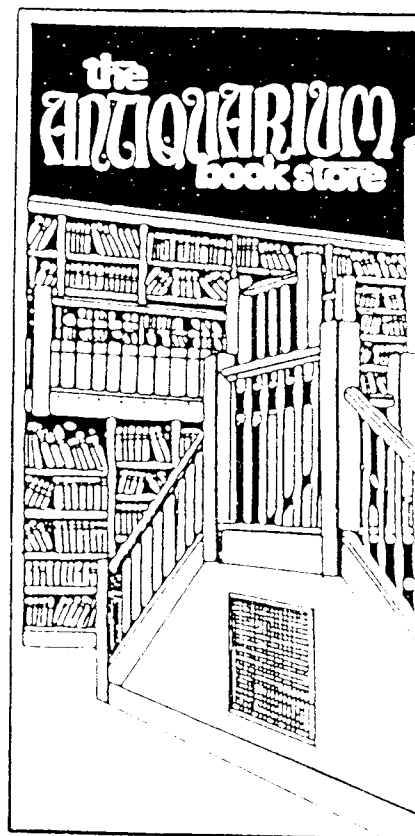
The national hotline will provide counseling for farmers and ranchers wishing to enroll in the Integrated Farm Management Program and/or the Water Quality Incentives Program.

Assistance will also be available for those farmers interested in enrolling field windbreaks, grass waterways and contour grass strips in the Conservation Reserve Program or making farm program base adjustments for environmental purposes.

The Sustainable Options Hotline is a service of the Center for Rural Affairs in cooperation with the Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, a grass roots network of sustainable agriculture, environmental, church, rural and food organizations.

A Farm Program Options Guide is also available for \$3.00 from the Center for Rural Affairs. Prepared by the Sustainable Agriculture Working Group in January 1991, the guide explains the 1990 Farm Bill incentives to practice sustainable agriculture. It can be ordered from the Center for Rural Affairs at PO Box 406, Walthill, Nebraska, 68067.

The Center for Rural Affairs is a private non-profit research and advocacy organization based in Northeast Nebraska.



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In Spite of Public Skepticism and Congressional Findings

Media's Strange Rage for Silence about Assassination

by Carl Oglesby

The author is a writer and researcher living in the Boston area.

Insight Features

Oliver Stone's current film, "JFK," dealing with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, was released December 20, 1991, but well before its release the project had been sharply attacked by journalists who ordinarily could not care less what Hollywood has to say about such great events as the Dealey Plaza shooting of November 22, 1963.

The attack on Stone has enlisted (a) the Boston Globe (editorial), the Boston Herald, the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, and Time magazine, and several other outlets were known to have been prowling the "JFK" set for angles. The intensity of this interest contrasts sharply with 1979, when the House Assassinations Committee published its finding of probable conspiracy in the JFK assassination, and the mass media reacted with one day of headlines and then a long, bored yawn.

How are we to understand this strange inconsistency? It is, of course, dangerous to attack the official report of a congressional committee; better to let it die a silent death. But a Hollywood film cannot be ignored; a major production by a leading director must be discredited, and if it can be done before the

film is even made, so much the better.

Garrison's Case

"JFK" is based chiefly on Louisiana Judge Jim Garrison's 1988 memoir, *On the Trail of the Assassins* (New York: Sheridan Square Press), in which Garrison tells of his frustrated attempts to expose the conspiracy that he (and the vast majority of the American people) believes responsible for the murder at Dealey Plaza.

Garrison has argued since 1967 that Oswald was telling the truth when he called himself a "patsy." He believes that JFK was killed and Oswald framed by a rightwing "parallel government" seemingly much like "the Enterprise" discovered in the Iran-contra scandal in the 1980s and currently being rediscovered in the emerging BCCI scandal.

The conspirators of 1963, Garrison has theorized, grew alarmed at JFK's moves toward de-escalation in Vietnam, normalization of U.S. relations with Cuba, and détente with the Soviet Union. They hit upon a violent but otherwise easy remedy for the problem of JFK's emerging pacifism, Garrison believes, in the promotion by crossfire of Vice President Lyndon Johnson.

Stone hardly expected a movie with such a challenging message to escape notice, but he

was startled to find himself under sharp attack while "JFK" was still being filmed. "Since when are movies judged," he said angrily, "sight-unseen, before completion and on the basis of a pirated first-draft screenplay?"

The Ignorant Critics

The first out of his corner was Jon Margolis, a syndicated Chicago Tribune columnist who assured his readers in May, when Stone had barely begun filming in Dallas, that "JFK" would prove "an insult to the intelligence" and "decency" ("JFK Movie and Book Attempt to Rewrite History," May 14, p. 19). Margolis had not seen one page of the first-draft screenplay (now in its sixth draft), but even so he felt qualified to warn his readers that Stone was making not just a bad movie but an evil one. "There is a point," Margolis fumed, "at which intellectual myopia becomes morally repugnant. Mr Stone's new movie proves that he has passed that point. But then so has [producer] Time-Warner and so will anyone who pays American money to see the film."

What bothered Margolis so much about "JFK" is that it is based on Garrison, whom Margolis described as "bizarre" for having "in 1969 [1967 actually] claimed that the assassination of President Kennedy was a conspiracy

by some officials of the Central Intelligence Agency."

Since Margolis and other critics of the "JFK" project are getting their backs up about facts, it is important to note here that this is not at all what Garrison said. In two books and countless interviews, Garrison has argued that the most likely incubator of an anti-JFK conspiracy was the cesspool of Mafia hit men assembled by the CIA in its now-infamous Operation Mongoose, its JFK-era program to murder Fidel Castro.

But Garrison also rejects the theory that the Mafia did it by itself, a theory promoted mainly by G. Robert Blakey, chief counsel of the House Assassinations Committee (HAC) of 1978 and co-author (with HAC writer Richard Billings) of *The Plot to Kill the*

President (New York: Times Books, 1981). "If the Mafia did it,"

Garrison told this reporter, "why did the government so hastily abandon the investigation? Why did it become so eagerly the chief artist of the cover-up?"

More important, Garrison's investigation of Oswald established that this presumed leftwing loner was associated in the period just before the assassination with three individuals who had clear ties to the CIA and its

Continued on page 12

About Clay Shaw

CO

It is true that Garrison could not convince the New Orleans jury that Shaw had a motive to conspire against JFK. (Editor's note: The Shaw jury was convinced, according to a poll taken after the verdict, that there was a conspiracy to kill JFK.) This is because he could not prove that Shaw was a CIA agent. Had Garrison been able to establish a Shaw link to the CIA, then JFK's adversarial relationship with the CIA-Mafia assassination plots against world leaders (known as Task Force W, the hit squad targeted Castro and others) would have become material and a plausible Shaw motive might have come into focus. But in 1975, six years after Shaw's acquittal and a year after his death, a CIA headquarters staff officer, Victor Marchetti, disclosed that Garrison was right, that Shaw, and Ferrie as well, were indeed connected to the CIA. Marchetti further revealed that CIA Director Richard Helms -- a supporter of the CIA-Mafia plots against Castro -- had committed the CIA to helping Shaw in his trouble with Garrison. What the CIA might have done in this regard is not known, but Marchetti's revelation gives us every reason to presuppose a CIA hand in the wrecking of Garrison's case against Shaw.

George Lardner is not impressed by the proof of a CIA connection to Shaw. He responds dismissively that Shaw's CIA position was only that of informant: Shaw, he writes, "was a widely traveled

businessman who had occasional contacts with the CIA's Domestic Contact Service. Does that make him an assassin?" Of course not, and Garrison never claimed it did. But it certainly does -- or ought to -- stimulate an interest in Shaw's relationship to Oswald and Ferrie. Is it not strikingly at variance with the Warren Commission's lone-nut theory of Oswald to find him circulating within a CIA orbit in the months just ahead of the assassination? Why is Lardner so hot to turn away from this evidence?

How fascinating, moreover, that Lardner should claim with such an air of finality to know all about Shaw's ties to the CIA, since a thing like this could only be known for a certainty to a highly placed CIA officer. And if Lardner is not (mirabile dictu) himself an officer of the CIA, then all he can plausibly claim to know about Shaw is what the CIA chooses to tell him. Has George Lardner not heard that the CIA lies?



Ted Spiegel/Black Star

Marrs Book, Stone's Film: National Hallucination Cannot End Without Reopening Investigation

by Ronnie Dugger

The author is the publisher of the *Texas Observer*, and the author of *LBJ biography, The Politician: The Life and Times of Lyndon Johnson*.

Crossfire: The Plot that killed Kennedy
by Jim Marrs

New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, Inc.,
1989 Clothbound and paperback

The Federal government methodically and systematically lied to the world about who killed President Kennedy and how they killed him. That appalling fact, which has long been manifest to most people who are well-informed on the subject, among whom I number myself, has shadowed our collective life for a quarter of a century.

The large consequence which followed on the lie most closely was the permanent distortion of the 1963 assassination in history. Being big and impressively elaborated, the lie was respectable, and even to approach the truth, that President Kennedy was ambushed in a crossfire, that there had to be at least two shooters, and that this meant there could well have been a large, politically-motivated conspiracy, was long regarded by conventional minds, which after all are in the majority, as nuts.

But the lie has had much larger consequences far from the center of itself, consequences which have eaten away at our national vitals in hiddenly-working ways, making some of us spasmodically furious, and some of us paranoid and some of us contemptuous of even the hope that virtue still abides in our governmental center. The lie was the hidden genesis of President Johnson's credibility gap, and it is the original enduring cause of our seeping loss of our collective confidence in ourselves. Our country has never been the same and never will be.

At the outset of this book review, I suggest that we try once and for all to revise our mindsets on the Kennedy assassination. There is persuasive hard evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald was framed. We should accept this as quite possible. In 1978 the otherwise almost worthless re-investigation of the assassination by a House select committee concluded, on the basis of newly-discovered acoustical evidence, that at least four shots were fired and, given the known number of seconds during which they were fired and the kind of rifle Oswald was alleged to have fired, that therefore President Kennedy "was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy." Let us begin, responding to Jim Marrs' 625-page book, with the presumption that there was a conspiracy, and not with the presumption that Oswald and only Oswald shot Kennedy. One's mind-set on which of these presumptions to admit into one's thinking determines there

who, on this subject, is respectable and who is not.

Having meditated on the assassination across 28 years — hearing again the sounds of firing I heard, seeing again the sights I saw in Dealey Plaza as the press bus sped through it; staying on in Dallas reporting, reporting, reporting on what happened; poring befuddled over the 26 volumes of the Warren Report; talking excitedly to thousands of people about it until finally in quest of calmness I set myself a rule not to talk about it at all; interviewing more people; reading many, but far from all, and reviewing some, of the books about it — I wish to make a second preliminary point. On this subject you either are or are not a sucker for the government's original lies. The government lied to us and has not corrected its lies — indeed, the government keeps the body of the unjiggered evidence locked away from us still. Who, then, shall we thank for our collective arrival, confirmed in many public opinion polls, at the conclusion that Kennedy was killed by conspirators? We must thank the citizens who have refused to accept the government's lies and have worked to find and publish whatever parts of the truth they can find. The fact that these citizens have included some crazies, and some writers who don't know the difference between a suspicion and a fact, and some propagandists who are more interested in their own screeds than in what happened, is there, but it is not here. Generally speaking, the nation is in the debt of "the conspiracy theorists," and the "assassination buffs", for what hesitant progress we have made during the last quarter century toward healing the gaping wound left by the enormous lie that was plunged into us.

Marrs' Premises

Jim Marrs provides an effective overview of his book in his essay published in this issue of the *Observer*.

He does not know who killed Kennedy; no one who has written a book about the subject does. One should keep that fact not only in one's mind but foremost there.

Marrs dismisses the possibilities that Castro or the Soviets killed Kennedy. I think Marrs is wrong in doing that. Kennedy was trying to kill Castro (as President Johnson exclaimed to me outright in the White House); tit-for-tat, get-him-before-he-gets-me, is at least as plausible a motive for killing Kennedy as many others that are postulated, and anyone familiar with the history of the KGB would not put murdering an American President past it.

Marrs also plays lightly on, and by implication dismisses, as sources of plausible leading suspects, local Dallas law-enforcement authorities and hard-right-wing wealthy personages in private life. Absent proof of who

did it — absent what Bill Alexander of the Dallas District Attorney's office once characterized to me as "the greasy thumbprint" that the prosecutor is really looking for — I believe Marrs is wrong in that, too.

To summarize my own overall conceptual approach to the assassination, as it has evolved, in a sentence: Five or six political groups could have been the source of the conspiracy to kill Kennedy, and I can make a very plausible case for each of them, but they are mutually exclusive possibilities. Marrs takes an opposite approach toward the same evidence and considerations. In effect declaring his belief in a high level domestic conspiracy and his disbelief in either an international or a low-level domestic conspiracy he argues that the leading suspects are the FBI, the CIA, the U.S. military and the mob, and that since the first three work together all the time and the Mob has worked with the CIA, elements of all of them might have done it. For reasons of caution and probity stubbornly rooted in the presumption of innocence, I definitely prefer my approach — hey, I want proof — but there is something to be said for Marrs' approach, too. What he has done, as he writes, is give us a work that is "a distillation of the numerous documentaries that have been produced over the years." That is a useful service. In *Crossfire* he ranges as persuasively as he can across all the suspicions, and the grounds for suspicions, that are subsumed under his four groups of principal suspects, never choosing among them on the ground that they could have acted together. That is an exercise worth the time it takes. For instance, considering the persuasive indications (although no hard proof) that Oswald was an agent, quite possibly a paid one, of the U.S. government, which Marrs marshals, the author's bias in favor of a domestic conspiracy does not lack foundation. Marrs also suspects that Johnson had some role in the assassination, but disallows the idea that he was the source of it, saying, to wit: "most serious students of the assassination cannot discount the idea that Johnson, in some way, played a role in the Dallas tragedy — But did Johnson really have enough power to initiate the assassination and force literally dozens of government officials and agents to lie and cover up that fact? Probably not." But the last words of the book are these: "One can almost hear the sad spirit of John F. Kennedy whispering from Dealey Plaza: *Et tu, Lyndon?*"

Yarborough Contradicts

As with any widely-ramifying murder, the substance of this subject is in the details; to experience Marrs' book you must read it. Here I shall limit myself, for examples of the details which Marrs has recounted, to a few

matters of primary importance.

Being the Democratic U.S. Senator from Texas, Ralph Yarborough was riding in the presidential motorcade in the limousine with Vice President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson. In an interview with Marrs (and in others with me, which I have not yet published), Yarborough backed up Kenneth O'Donnell and others who said the car bearing the Kennedys and John Connally paused after the firing began — that its rear brake lights blinked on — that it slowed, agonizingly slowed, perhaps to a stop, and did not accelerate until after Kennedy's head was blown off.

You will recall the tale of the heroism of Secret Service agent Rufus Youngblood. Riding in the front seat of the Johnson-Yarborough car, Youngblood said, "I stepped over into the back seat and sat on top of the Vice President," protecting him from the gunfire. President Johnson told the Warren Commission: "Agent Youngblood turned in a flash, immediately after the first explosion — I was pushed down by Agent Youngblood — he vaulted over the back seat and sat on me. I was bent over under the weight of Agent Youngblood's body, toward Mrs. Johnson and Senator Yarborough." Johnson wrote later: "Agent Youngblood's quick reaction was as brave an act as I have ever seen anyone perform."

"It just didn't happen," Yarborough told Marrs (as Yarborough has also told me). It was a small car. Johnson was a big man, tall. His knees were up against his chin as it was. There was no room for that to happen." Johnson and Youngblood both ducked down. Yarborough said, and Youngblood never left the front seat. Think this over. Meditate on it, a long time.

Meditate additionally on the following. Yarborough also said that Youngblood had held a small walkie-talkie over the back of the car's seat and that Youngblood and Johnson had both put their ears to it. "They had it turned down real low", he told Marrs. "I couldn't hear what they were listening to." Marrs does not say when Yarborough said this was occurring, but the senator told me it was happening as they were being driven along before the shooting began.

One must conclude from Yarborough's further remarks that his testimony was not welcome at the Warren Commission. The United States senator from Texas from 1957 through 1971, Yarborough told Marrs that in the summer of 1964:

"After I wrote them [the Warren Commission], you see, a couple of fellows came to see me. They walked in like they were a couple of deputy sheriffs and I was a bank robber. I didn't like their attitude. As a senator, I felt insulted. They went off and wrote up something and brought it back for me to sign. But I refused. I threw it in the drawer and let it lay there for weeks. And they had on there the last sentence which stated, 'this is all I know about the assassination.' They wanted me to sign this thing, then say this is all I know. Of course, I would never have signed it.

"Finally, after some weeks, they began to

Continued on following page

'JFK', the Media, and Silence

Continued from previous page

anti-Castro operations, namely, Clay Shaw, David Ferrie, and Guy Banister.

Garrison did not draw a conclusion from Oswald's ties to these men. Rather he maintains that their presence in Oswald's story at such a time cannot be presumed innocuous and dismissed out of hand. The Assassinations Committee itself confirmed and puzzled over these ties in 1978, and even Blakey, a fierce rival of Garrison, accepts their central importance in the explanation of Oswald's role.

Lardner Grinds His Axe

The most serious attacks against the "JFK" project are those of the Washington Post's George Lardner, perhaps the dean of the Washington intelligence press corps. Lardner covered the Warren Commission during the 1960s, at one point ran a special Post investigation of the case, and covered the House Select Committee on Assassinations in the late 1970s.

Lardner's May 19 article on the front page of the Sunday Post "Outlook" section, "On the Set: Dallas in Wonderland," ran to almost seven column feet, and by far the greater part of that was dedicated to the contemptuous dismissal of any thought that Garrison has made a positive contribution to this case. Stone must be crazy too, Lardner seemed to be saying, to be taking a nut like Garrison so seriously.

And yet Lardner's particulars are oddly strained. Lardner wrote, for example, that the Assassinations Committee "may have" heard testimony linking Oswald with Ferrie and Ferrie with the CIA. Lardner knows very well that the committee did hear such testimony, no maybes about it, and that it found this

testimony convincing. Then Lardner implicitly denied that the committee heard such testimony at all by adding grotesquely that it "may also have" heard no such thing. Why does Lardner want unwary readers to think that the well-established connections between Oswald, Ferrie, and the CIA exist only in Garrison's imagination?

Lardner stooped to a still greater deception with respect to the so-called "three tramps,"

the men who were arrested in the railroad yard just north of Dealey Plaza right after the shooting and taken to the police station, but then released without being identified. Lardner knows that there is legitimate concern about these men. For one thing, they were in exactly the area from which about half of the Dealey Plaza eyewitnesses believed shots were fired. For another, they do not look like ordinary tramps. Photos show that their clothing and shoes were unworn and that they were freshly shaved and barbered. But Lardner waved aside the question of their disappeared identities with a high-handed ad hominem sniff that, even if the police had taken their names, those who suspect a conspiracy "would just insist the men had lied about who they were."

Lardner next poked fun at the pirated first-draft version of Stone's screenplay for suggesting that as many as five or six shots might have been fired in Dealey Plaza. "Is this the Kennedy assassination," Lardner chortled, "or the Charge of the Light Brigade?" As though only the ignorant could consider a fifth or even, smirk, a sixth shot realistic.

But here is what the House Assassinations Committee's final report said on page 68 about the number of shots detected on the famous acoustics tape: "Six sequences of impulses that could have been caused by a noise such as gunfire were initially identified as having been transmitted over channel 1 [of police radio]. Thus, they warranted further analysis." The committee analyzed only four of these impulses because (a) it was short of funds and time when the acoustics tape was discovered, (b) the impulses selected for analysis conformed to timing sequences of the Zapruder film, and (c) any fourth shot established a second gun and thus a conspiracy. All four of these impulses turned out to be shots. Numbers one and six remain to be analyzed. That is, the acoustics evidence shows that there were at least four shots and perhaps as many as six.

Lardner's most interesting error is his charge that "JFK" mis-states the impact of the assassination on the growth of the Vietnam war. No doubt Stone's first-draft screenplay

telescoped events in suggesting that LBJ began escalating the Vietnam war the second day after Dallas. Quietly and promptly, however, LBJ did indeed stop the military build-down that JFK had begun; and as soon as LBJ won the 1964 election as the peace candidate, he started taking the lid off. Motivated by a carefully staged pretext, the Gulf of Tonkin "incident," the bombing of North Vietnam began in February 1965. It is puzzling to see such a sophisticated journalist as Lardner trying to finesse the fact that Kennedy was moving toward

de-escalation when he was killed and that the massive explosion of the U.S. war effort occurred under Johnson. In this sense, it is not only reasonable but necessary to see the JFK assassination as a major turning point in the war.

Strangest of all is that Lardner himself has come to believe in a Dealey Plaza conspiracy, admitting that the Assassinations Committee's findings in this respect "still seem more plausible than any of the criticisms" and subsequently restating the point in a tossed-off "acknowledgment that a probable conspiracy took place."

The reader will search Lardner's writing in vain, however, for the slightest elaboration of this point even though it is obviously the crux of the entire debate. My own JFK file, for example, contains 19 clippings with Lardner's byline and several Washington Post clippings by other writers from the period in which the Assassinations Committee announced its conspiracy findings. The only piece I can find among these that so much as whispers of support for the committee's work was written by myself and Jeff Goldberg ("Did the Mob Kill Kennedy?" Washington Post Outlook section, February 25, 1979).

If the Warren critics were a mere handful of quacks jabbering about UFOs, as Lardner insinuates, one might understand the venom he and other mainstreamers bring to this debate.

But this is simply not the case. The Post's own poll shows that 56 percent of us — 75 percent of those with an opinion — believe a conspiracy was afoot at Dallas. And it was the U.S. Congress, after a year-long, \$4 million,

expert investigation, that concluded, "President John F. Kennedy was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy."

The Reluctant Media

So what is it with the American news media and the JFK murder? Why do normally skeptical journalists reserve their most hostile skepticism for those who have tried to keep this case on the national agenda? What is it about Dealey Plaza that not even the massive disbelief of the American people and the imprimatur of the Congress can legitimate this issue to the news media?

As one who has followed this case closely and actively for nearly 20 years — and who has often heard the charge of "paranoia" as a response to the bill of particulars — I find it increasingly hard to resist concluding that the media's strange rage for silence in this matter presents us with a textbook case of denial, disassociation, and double-think. I hear frustration and fear in the reasoning of Lardner and Margolis and their comrades who constantly erect straw men to destroy and whose basic response to those who would argue the facts is yet another dose of ad hominem character assassination, as we are beholding in the media's response to Stone and Garrison:

-- Frustration because the media cannot stop Stone's movie from carrying the thesis of a JFK conspiracy to a global audience already strongly inclined to believe it.

-- Fear because the media cannot altogether suppress a doubt in their collective mind that the essential message of "JFK" may be correct after all, and that, if it is, their current relationship to the government may have to change profoundly.

And perhaps a touch of shame, too, because in the persistence of the mystery of JFK's death, there may be the beginning of an insight that the media are staring their own greatest failure in the face.

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bug me. 'You're holding this up, you're holding this up,' they said, demanding that I sign the report. So I typed one up myself and put basically what I told you about how the cars all stopped. I put in there, 'I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but for the protection of future presidents, they should be trained to take off when a shot is fired.' I sent that over."

Marrs added: "Yarborough also was shocked to find that all vital assassination information was sent to President Johnson before it ever went to the Warren Commission or even Attorney General Robert Kennedy."

Dallas DA: Three Calls From White House

In the Dallas News the morning after the historic murder of John Kennedy, Dallas DA

Henry Wade was quoted stating that preliminary reports indicated that more than one person were involved in the shooting. But Wade then immediately reversed himself and (obviously long before he could know that it was true) told the press that the still-living Oswald did it alone. Why? Years later Wade was quoted as stating:

"Cliff Carter, President Johnson's aide, called me three times from the White House that Friday night. He said that President Johnson felt any word of a conspiracy — some plot by foreign nations — to kill President Kennedy would shake our nation to its foundations — Washington's word to me was that it would hurt foreign relations if I alleged a conspiracy — whether I could prove it or not, I would just charge Oswald with plain murder and go for

the death penalty. So I went down to the Police Department at City Hall to see Captain Fritz — to make sure the Dallas police didn't involve any foreign country in the assassination."

Citing work by the late Bernard Fensterwald, Marrs also informs us that in an internal Warren Commission memorandum of Feb. 17, 1964, Melvin Eisenberg recorded that Earl Warren had told his fellow commissioners, regarding how he had been "pressured" to accept the chairmanship by President Johnson, that: "The President stated that...some rumors went so far as attributing the assassination to a faction within the government wishing the presidency assumed by President Johnson. Others, if not quenched, could conceivably lead the country into a war

— He placed emphasis on the quenching of rumors and precluding further speculation."

Throughout Marrs' book however, there is a serious and pervasive problem: the question of the quality of the evidence.

I realize that Marrs teaches a course on the assassination at the University of Texas at Arlington. Nevertheless, his footnoting of his book is lamentably insufficient. This is a strange lapse indeed in a work which is meant to be an authoritative distillation of the antecedent assassination books, because the authenticity, the reliability, of this fact, and this one, and that one, and that one over there is the very heart of the matter, and the only way for a reader to judge the facts is by knowing their

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Background for Film

Evidence of Conspiracy in JFK Assassination

by Jim Marrs

Jim Marrs is the author of Crossfire: The Plot that killed Kennedy, one of two books on which Stone's movie "JFK" is based

Here is a brief overview of the case, with no attention paid to theories or the divergent personalities of the private researchers.

Square One: the death of President Kennedy was not the work of a lone assassin as claimed by Lyndon Johnson's handpicked Warren Commission. There definitely was a conspiracy that resulted in the assassination, as well as a demonstrable conspiracy to prevent the first conspiracy from being revealed. Whether these two conspiracies were one and the same remains to be proven.

The evidence?

The idea that a single assassin perpetrated the assassination rests entirely on the "single-bullet" theory, to wit, that one 6.5-mm copper-jacketed rifle slug fired from a sixth-floor window struck Kennedy in the middle of his back (at the level of his third thoracic vertebra, according to the autopsy report), somehow changed direction and turned upwards coming out of the front of his neck near his Adam's apple, twisted in midair and struck Texas Governor John Connally near his right armpit, entered Connally's chest shattering his fifth rib and sending bullet and bone fragments all over his chest cavity, came out near his right nipple and somehow managed to strike his right wristbone (one of the densest bones in the body) from the top or anterior side, and shattered the wristbone and came out of the wrist to strike Connally in the left thigh.

Later that afternoon, a bullet was discovered on a Parkland Hospital stretcher which could not be conclusively connected to Kennedy or Connally, but was proclaimed by the federal government to be the bullet which caused the wounds just described. The recovered slug was "pristine," with 159 of its original 161 grains of weight intact.

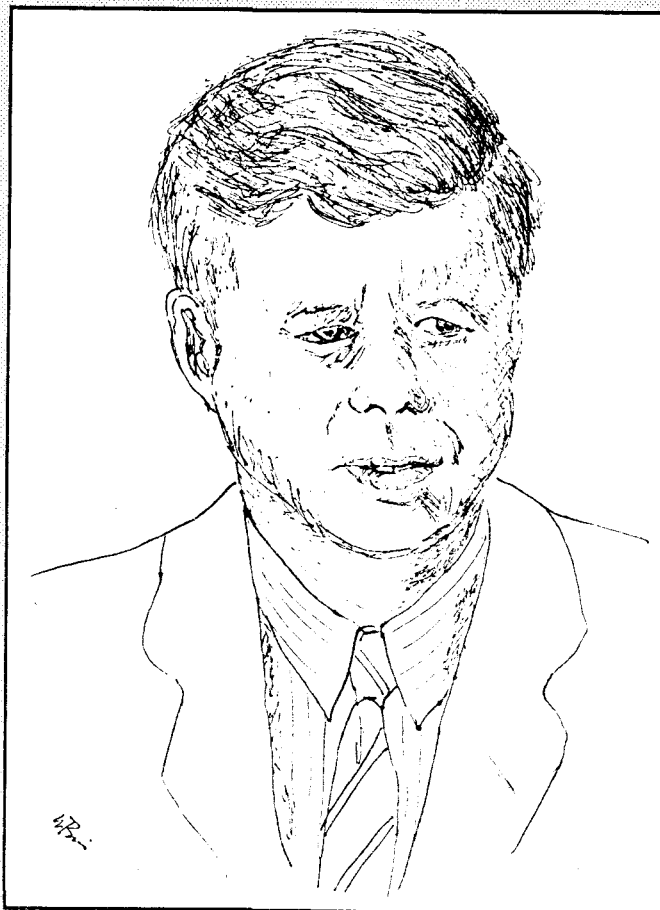
To persons even vaguely familiar with ballistics or forensic science, this was and is hogwash. Just one of the facts that put the lie to the theory of the Parkland bullet is this one: with Connally's wrist X-ray available to the public, we find more grains of bullet remain in his wrist today than are missing from the slug the government still claims caused his wrist wound.

If the "single-bullet" theory collapses, so does the "lone-assassin" theory, because a single bolt-action rifle could not have been fired rapidly enough to hit both Kennedy and Connally within the time span recorded by the Zapruder film of the assassination.

Further hard evidence of the existence of two or multiple assassins comes from the acoustical tests conducted by two separate groups of scientists commissioned by the House committee in the 1970's. More such hard evidence is provided by the Hughes and Bronson films, which corroborate eyewitness testimony that more than one man was seen on the sixth floor of the Depository both before the assassination and as long as six minutes after the shooting — more than four minutes after Oswald was encountered by both a Dallas policeman and his work supervisor in a downstairs lunchroom of the building.

So, now we consider a conspiracy.

It is my opinion, based on considerations that I regard as logical and controlling, that the theory that international communists were behind the plot can be dismissed.



First, communists — whether of the Soviet or Cuban stripe — had nothing to gain and everything to lose from killing President Kennedy. They gained President Lyndon B. Johnson, a man with far grimmer anti-communist credentials than Kennedy, and thereby they ran the risk of another U.S. invasion of Cuba, or even World War III. It might be reasonable to suspect that the government hid proof of a communist plot in 1963-64 to avoid war, but if it had such proof it certainly would have leaked it in the early 1970s to regain support for the anti-communist war in Vietnam.

Furthermore, there is no solid evidence that either Oswald or his executioner Jack Ruby had any connection with U.S. communists. Quite the opposite, since both Oswald and Ruby can be connected to CIA-supported anti-Castro Cubans and to the FBI.

So now we, with Oliver Stone, must consider a domestic conspiracy — or conspiracies. Anyone could have hired competent assassins to kill the president, but no one would have dared move against the chief executive officer without firm assurances that there would be no meaningful pursuit of the conspirators. That proposition leads us to a second conspiracy, to block a real investigation of the crime and cover up any traces of the truth of the matter.

Imagine that you are the detective in a homicide case. You arrive at the scene to find that the police have arrested four suspects. You are advised that suspect number four has been discovered fabricating, destroying, and altering evidence in this case as well as intimidating witnesses into silence. Who is going to the top of your suspect list?

In the case of the assassination of President Kennedy, suspect number four is the federal government.

Photographic experts around the world have agreed with assassination researchers that the famous backyard photo of Oswald with a rifle is a sophisticated fabrication. Only govern-

ment-hired experts have contended that the photo, replete with conflicting shadows, missing fingertips, and an Oswald figure that is not proportional with the known width of the newspaper he is holding, is genuine. Internal CIA documents indicate that this film, vital evidence in the case, was in the hands of the CIA's National Photo Interpretation Center the night of the assassination, but there has been no official explanation of what may have been done to the film or why.

A note that Lee Harvey Oswald delivered to the Dallas FBI office two weeks before the assassination was destroyed on orders of the chief agent in charge three days after Kennedy's death. It is still not known exactly what the note contained.

The CIA claimed to have a tape recording of Oswald in the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, yet FBI agents reported that the voice on the tape was not Oswald's, and the CIA destroyed the tape before the Warren Commission could clear up the matter.

The Dallas Police evidence sheet, as presented to the American public by the Warren Commission was altered to eliminate any reference to the paraffin test on Oswald's right cheek. The results of that test were negative — strong, although not conclusive proof that he had not fired a rifle that day.

A photograph from Oswald's possessions was mutilated, while in the hands of the feds, so as to obscure a license plate.

Among the American citizens who have said they were intimidated by FBI agents are Jean Hill, Nelson Delgado, Ed Hoffman, Phillip Willis, Roger Craig, Richard Carr, and several others.

Today the chief suspects in Kennedy's murder include the Mafia, the CIA, the FBI and the U.S. Military. These four suspects are known to have, or to have had, working cooperative relationships. It's like the story of the blind man and the elephant. In looking at the mob, the military, or the intelligence agencies, we have been viewing only a part of the whole.

It is now established history that the CIA and the Mafia have worked hand in hand on a number of projects, including the assassination of national leaders. It is also beyond doubt that "military officer" and "CIA officer" are often interchangeable terms. The FBI has been keeping tabs on all three of the other suspect groups. Lesser known, but well documented, is the fact that some Mafia bosses, such as Johnny Roselli, carried military rank and privileges during the secret war against Castro in the early 1960s.

A massive amount of evidence and information is now available that illuminates the general outline of the plot that killed Kennedy. Oliver Stone has looked at this material with an open mind. The national and local news media generally have not.

It is unfortunate that a meaningful look at our recent history has to occur through the eyes of a Hollywood director, but someone had to pick up the ball dropped by the federal government and the national news media. Rather than attack Oliver Stone as "irresponsible" and sneer at the legion of sincere assassination researchers as "buffs", wouldn't it behoove the news media to look at, evaluate, and then disseminate the credible information that is now available concerning the American coup of 1963?

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a r t e x h i b i t s

Anderson O'Brien Gallery

8724 Pacific St., Omaha.

Adam Whitney Gallery8725 Shamrock Rd., Omaha.
393-1051**Antiquarium Gallery**1215 Harney St., Omaha.
342-9617

Through Jan. 15-Bill Farmer.

Artists' Cooperative Gallery

405 S. 11 St.,

Bemis New Gallery614 S. 11 St., Omaha.
341-7130

Through Jan. 5-David Simpson

Burkholder Project719 "P" St. Lincoln.
477-3305

Hours: 10-5 p.m., Mon-Sat.

Cathedral Arts ProjectSt. Cecelia's Cathedral, 701 N. 40 St.,
Omaha.
558-3100**Council Bluffs Artist's Loft**

407 W. Broadway, Council Bluffs.

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; noon-4
p.m. Sat.**Creighton Fine Arts Gallery**Creighton University
27 & California, Omaha.
280-2509Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Mon.-Sat.; noon-4
p.m. Sun.**Eyesound Gallery**109 N. 50 St., Omaha.
553-4432

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon-Sat.

Gallery 722709 Leavenworth, Omaha.
345-3347**Garden of the Zodiac**Old Market Passageway, 1042 Howard St.,
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4755421

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Haymarket Art Gallery

119 S. 9 St., Lincoln.

475-1061

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues.-Sat.

Hillmer Art GalleryCollege of St. Mary, 1901 S. 72 St., Omaha.
399-2621

Hours: 1 p.m.-5 p.m., daily, except Fri.

**Iowa Western Community
College Fine Arts Gallery**2700 College Rd., Council Bluffs.
325-3352**Jewish Community Center**333 S. 132 St., Omaha.
334-8200Hours: 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Sat.; 1 p.m.-7 p.m.
Sun.**Joslyn Art Museum**2200 Dodge, Omaha.
342-3300Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues. & Wed., Fri.
& Sat.; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thurs.; 1 p.m.-7
p.m. Sun.Through Jan. 19-Kratky Film: The Art of
Czechoslovakian Animation.Through Jan. 19-Posters of Paris. 1880-
1900, from the Terry and Louis L. Silver
Collection.**Local Artists' Exchange**

Standard Blue, 1415 Harney, Omaha.

Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; noon-4
p.m., Sat. & Sun.**Metro Arts Artspace**601 S. 16 St., Omaha.
341-7910Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Mon.-Fri. or by
appointment.**Museum of Nebraska Art**24 & Central Ave., Kearney.
(308) 234-8559

Hours: 1 p.m.-5 p.m., Tues.-Sat.

Jan. 7 through Jan. 24-Francis Kraft

Jan. 26 through March 6-Prairie Light Arts
Showcase.**Passageway Gallery**417 S. 11 St., Omaha.
341-1910Hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Wed.; 11
a.m.-9 p.m. Thurs.; <EC>Photographer's
Gallery, Inc.

4831 Dodge St., Omaha.

551-5731

Hours: 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; 1 p.m.-5
p.m. Sun.;

closed Sat.; or by appointment only.

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery12 & "R" Sts., UNL Campus, Lincoln.
472-2461Hours: Tues. & Wed., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun.
2 p.m.-9 p.m.; Thurs.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.;
closed Mon.Through Jan. 26-Master of Fine Arts
Student Biennial.Jan. 28 through April 5-A Personal Geom-
etry: Paintings by Martha Horvay.Jan. 29 through April 19-Sheldon Solo:
Juan Hamilton.**13th St. Gallery**

1264 S. 13 St., Omaha.

Hours: 1 p.m.-5 p.m., Fri., Sat., & Sun.

Sioux City Art Center

513 Nebraska St., Sioux City, Iowa.

**University of Nebraska at
Omaha Gallery**

616 S. 11 St. (2nd Floor in CAT Bldg.)

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.

Other Midwest Gallery Listings**Art Institute of Chicago**Michigan at Adams St., Chicago, Illinois.
(312) 443-3600Hours: 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Mon., Wed.,
& Fri.; 10:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Tues.; 10 a.m.-5
p.m. Sat.; noon-5 p.m. Sun.

Admission: \$5, seniors & students \$2.50.

Des Moines Art Center

4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

(515) 277-4405

Hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues. & wed., Fri.
& Sat.; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Thurs.; noon-5 p.m.
Sun.; closed Mon.**Gallery 306**102 S. Dakota Ave., Sioux Falls, South
Dakota.**The Nelson Atkins Museum of
Art**

4525 Oak St., Kansas City, Missouri.

(816) 561-4000

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues.-Sat.; 1 p.m.-
5 p.m. Sun.

Admission: \$4 adults; \$1 students.

Permanent Collection free on Sat.

The Peace Museum

430 W. Erie

Chicago, Illinois 60610

(312) 440-1860

The need is still critical for the survival of this important, unique, museum. The gallery is still closed as they look for smaller, more affordable quarters. However, Peace Museum Exhibits are still traveling across the country. John Heartfield's Photomontages of the Nazi Period is currently in New York, and the Miami Youth Museum had three exhibits for an extended run last summer. They're about to send their exhibit on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Arizona State University (outside of Phoenix) where the King holiday has been a controversial subject. Send contributions to the above address to help them continue this vital mission.

Witter Gallery

609 Cayuga St., Storm Lake, Iowa.

Calendar Information

Jeanette Morgan
455-7205
P.O. Box 8158
Omaha, NE

a r e a e v e n t s

Note: Information was current as of press time, but changes may occur. Call for updates.

Directory of Venues:

Ballet Omaha, performs at the Orpheum Theatre, Omaha, 346-7332.

Bellevue Little Theatre, 203 W. Mission Ave., Bellevue 291-1554.

Bemis Foundation/New Gallery, 614 S. 11 St., Omaha. 341-7130. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

Blue Barn Theater, 1258 S. 13 St., Omaha, 345-1576.

Center Stage, 30 & "Q," Omaha, 733-5777.

Chanticleer Theater, 830 Franklin Ave., Council Bluffs, (712) 323-9955.

Circle Theater, 6064 Maple St., Omaha, 553-4715.

Civic Auditorium, 18 & Capitol, Omaha, 444-4750.

Creighton University, Performing Arts Center, 30 & Burt, Omaha. Art Gallery, 27 & California Sts., 280-2509.

Emmy Gifford Children's Theater, 3504 Center St., Omaha, 345-4849.

Firehouse Dinner and Theatre, 11 & Jackson Sts., Omaha. 346-8833.

Grande Olde Players, 701 S. 39 St., Omaha. 345-2462.

Henry Doorly Zoo, 10 & Deer Park Ave., Omaha. 733-8400.

Howard St. Tavern, 1112 Howard St., Old Market, Omaha. 341-0433.

Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St., Omaha. 342-3300.

Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12 & "R" Sts., Lincoln. 472-5353.

Magic Theater, 1417 Farnam St., Omaha. 346-1227.

New Cinema, 1514 Davenport St., Omaha. 346-8033. Film screenings most weekends at 5:20, 7:30 & 9:40 Fri. & Sat.; Sun. at 3 p.m.

Omaha Civic Auditorium, 18 & Capitol, 444-4750.

Omaha Children's Museum, 500 S. 20 St., 342-6164. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues.-Sat.; 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Sun.

Omaha Community Playhouse, 69 & Cass Sts., 553-0800.

Omaha Symphony Orchestra, see listings for venues, 342-3560.

Omaha Workshop Theater, 3419 "L" St., 558-2953. Shows Fri. & Sat. at 8 p.m.

Opera/Omaha, performs at Orpheum Theater, Omaha. 346-0357.

Orpheum Theater, 409 S. 16 St., Omaha. 444-4750.

Peter Kiewit Conference Center, 1313 Farnam St., Omaha.

Rosenblatt Stadium, 13 & Bert Murphy Dr., Omaha. 734-5271.

Strauss Performing Arts Center, on the UNO campus, 63 & Dodge.

University of Nebraska at Omaha, 63 & Dodge.

Upstairs Dinner Theater, 221 S. 19 St., Omaha. 344-7777.

Wesley House, African Community Theater, 2001 N. 35 St., Omaha.

Western Heritage Museum, 801 S. 10 St., Omaha. 444-5071.

SPECIAL EVENTS

V.V.A. Chapter #146 General Membership Meetings, 2nd Tues. each month at the V.F.W. Post, 33 & Leavenworth Sts., Omaha. Call Tom at 453-2568 for info.

Bisexual Support Group meets 1st Mon. of each month, 7 p.m. at the Cornerstone, in the upstairs conference room, 640 N. 16 St., Lincoln.

ENVIRONMENT, PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Earth Day meets every Tues. at Willa Cather Branch Library, 44 & Center, Omaha. 6:30 p.m.

Ecology Now U.N.O. meets every Sunday at 4 p.m. at the Milo Bail Student Center.

Youth for Peace meets every Wed., 6 p.m. upstairs at the Antiquarium, 1215 Harney, Omaha.

C.L.E.A.N. (Citizens Leading Environmental Action in Nebraska) meets 1st Thurs. each month at Dorothy Lanphier's, 5302 Izard, Omaha. 554-1108.

No-Name Recycling Group meets every Sat., 10 a.m.-noon at the First Presbyterian Church, 216 S. 34 St. (34 & Farnam), Omaha.

Habitat for Humanity Site Work Opportunities: If you can work, call the office, 457-5657, to find the location of any Tuesday (9-3), Saturday (9-3), or Thursday (5-8:30) workday. Please schedule ahead if you have a group. One big need now is for skilled leaders who will gain experience through repeated workdays.

Invite the Habitat fundraising quilt, "Home-spun Houses," to your church or organization and use the opportunity to talk about Omaha Habitat and sell tickets. Plan now to schedule a date, call Diann Greener at the Habitat Office, 457-5657.

Ongoing: **Nebraskans for Peace Health Care Signature Campaign.** Call 453-0776 for more info.

Meeting **Jan. 11** of ad hoc group being organized by the Omaha Central America Response Team, OCART, to respond to appearance in Omaha by Oliver North Jan. 23 (listed below). Group to meet at the Dorothy Day House, 801 N. 20, Omaha. For further information call Marilyn Felion, 551-5834, or Tim Alexander, 551-8665.

National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. **Jan. 18**, noon, W. Dale Clark Library, Omaha.

Jan. 19 through Jan. 26-Stop the Death Penalty in Nebraska Week:

Tues., Jan. 21-Lobbying Day in Lincoln, 8-11 a.m. at the State Capitol, Room 1126. For more information, 474-6575.

Tues., Jan. 21-Write-A-Thon, 7-10 p.m. at Augustana Lutheran Church, 38th and Lafayette, Omaha. To be a letter writer or to sponsor someone else, contact Paul at 558-7566 right away!

Thurs., Jan. 23- Bill Pelke of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation will speak at Creighton University in Omaha at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

For information about these and other activities that week, call Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty, 475-6575 (Lincoln) or 556-0692 (Omaha).

An Evening with Lt. Col. Oliver North. **Jan. 23.** Red Lion Main Ballroom in Omaha 6:30. \$19.75 per plate. For information call 402-593-0074.

Sun. Jan. 26-Youth for Peace Anti-Censorship Workshop at the Antiquarium, 1215 Harney St., Omaha. 2-6 p.m.

EXHIBITS & DISPLAYS

Through Jan 12-Omaha Children's Museum exhibit: Dinamations Real Sea Monsters-"Dinosaurs" of the Deep.

Through Feb. 14-Also at the Children's Museum, Where's Waldo traveling exhibit.

FILM (Lincoln)

Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln.

Thurs., Jan. 2 through Sun., Jan. 5 and

Thurs., Jan. 9 through Sun., Jan. 12 "Strangers in Good Company" by Cynthia

Scott. Screenings at 7 & 9 p.m. Matinees on Sat. at 1 & 3 p.m. & on Sun. at 3 & 5 p.m. (No 3 p.m. screening on Sun., Jan 12)

Thurs. & Fri., Jan. 16 & 17-"Chang: A Drama of the Wilderness" by Merian C. Cooper & Ernest B. Schoedsack, plus a short, "In the Land of the War Canoes by Edward S. Curtis. Screenings at 3, 7 & 9:15 p.m.

Sun., Jan. 19-"Pathfinder" by Nils Gaup. Screenings at 3,5,7 & 9 p.m.

Thurs., Jan. 23 through Sun., Jan 26 and **Thurs. Jan. 30 through Sat., Feb. 1**-"The 23rd International Tournee of Animation." Screenings at 7 & 9 p.m. Matinees on Sat. at 1 & 3 p.m. & on Sun. at 3 & 5 p.m.

MUSIC & DANCE (Omaha)

The Coffee House Series continues this winter at the Blue Barn Theater. Every Mon. at 8 p.m. the series features original material by local acoustic artists. Bring your own coffee cup. Call 345-1576 for more info.

New Music Tuesdays. Most Tues. nights the Howard Street Tavern features alternative music from local and national acts.

Every Sun. 6-9 p.m.—Omaha International Folk Dancers. Grace Lutheran Church, 26 & Woolworth Sts. Beginners welcome.

Saddle Creek Bar, Jan. 11, 7-band benefit for the Food Bank and Dorothy Day House. 5 PM. 3 cans of food or \$3. Rock'n'roll. No minors after 9 PM.

Feb. 8 Ground Hog Prom. 8:30 PM. \$5. Livestock Exchange Ballroom, 28 and L. Cash bar. The Linoma Mashers

THEATER (Omaha)

Omaha Community Playhouse. Mainstage: **Jan. 24 through Feb. 16**-"The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

Emmy Gifford Children's Theater **Jan. 24 through Feb. 16**-"A Woman Called Truth."

Firehouse Dinner Theater **Jan. 8 through March 8**-"See How They Run."

Center Stage Theater **Jan 31 through Feb. 23**-"Do Lord Remember Me"

Magic Theatre. **Jan. ?**, TBA, call 402-346-1227. "Sound Fields, Are We Hear."

14th Annual

Groundhog Prom

featuring:

The Linoma Mashers

Saturday February 8th 1992, 8:30 p.m.

Livestock Exchange Ballroom • 28th & L, Omaha • \$5 Admission

Military Targets Gulf War Conscientious Objectors...

By Colman McCarthy

Washington — A leader in the business of forming consciences has come forward, finally, to support a group of conscientious objectors to the Gulf War.

Archbishop John Roach of Minneapolis-St. Paul, and a ranking member of the U.S. Catholic Conference, has written to Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney to call for amnesty for American soldiers locked up for refusing to join the Pentagon's butchery against Iraq. In the Gulf, the first prisoners of war were our own kids.

Twenty-five conscientious-objector Marines have been currently confined to Camp Lejeune, N.C. An Army reserve physician, Capt. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, is serving a 30-month sentence at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., for saying no. Scores of resisters have been released with dishonorable discharges. An estimated 2,500 military personnel sought CO status after war hysteria commenced in August 1990. Only a few had their applications approved. Many were shackled and handcuffed and forcibly loaded onto Gulf-bound military planes. Go kill for America or else.

Roach's letter to Cheney argued that "those who in good conscience objected on moral grounds to fighting in the Gulf War (selective conscientious objectors) or any war (conscientious objectors) deserved support, respect

and legal protection." The Marines' subversion of that ideal at Lejeune ranged from procedural errors in CO prosecutions to housing them in yellow barracks and telling them no other color is suited for yellow cowards.

Those who resisted the Bush-Cheney-Schwarzkopf calls to slaughter were the genuine heroes of this war. One of them is Marine reservist Erik Larsen, sentenced to six months on Nov. 19. He put *Semper Fi* to his conscience above obedience to orders to fight in the Gulf. After his sentencing, Larsen put it well: "I have no regrets about what I did. I still think it's a GI's right to say no to war."

The Marines took no chances with Larsen.

His jurors were all Gulf War combat veterans. That rigging was in line with what Archbishop Roach wrote to Cheney: The "right to conscientious objection was effectively undermined by irregularities in the processing of claims, or inadequacies in existing CO regulations or their interpretation."

The last word is key. The military's interpretation of the Gulf War was that it wasn't a massacre, but America displaying its superpower prowess in the defense of freedom. Anyone in the military refusing to salute that delusion was of the criminal class.

Amnesty International, immune to governmental pap, currently lists Larsen, Huet-

Vaughn and 23 other refusers as prisoners of conscience. Were the United States still fighting a country whose power Pentagon propagandists have grossly exaggerated, the imprisoned conscientious objectors would likely be more visible than they are now. It was that way during the Vietnam War, which lasted a decade, not 100 hours. By war's end, courts were giving suspended sentences to draft resisters.

At Lejeune, Leavenworth and the other military prisons, honorable defiance goes on. From the Gulf War, it's about all the honor we have.

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...As Pax Christi Works on Their Behalf for Clemency

Pax Christi USA, a national Catholic group, has instituted a program, "Written on their Hearts," to support all the men and women who, for reasons of conscience, refused to fight in the Gulf War. Pax Christi Omaha has adopted Captain Yolanda Huet-Vaughn as its person of conscience.

Dr. Huet-Vaughn is was convicted of desertion and intent to shirk hazardous duty and was sentenced to two and a half years. No one was allowed to testify for the defense. She is a wife and mother of three children.

Letters, poems, stories, articles and books

may be sent to Dr. Huet-Vaughn at: Drawer A, United States Disciplinary Barracks; Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-7100.

(Remember, all her mail is opened by prison authorities before she receives it.)

Polite but firm letters asking for clemency can be directed to: General Daniel Christman; Commanding General; US Army Engineering Center; Ft. Leonard Wood, MO 65473. Telephone: 314-563-6116

Pax Christi also wants people to write to Dr. Huet-Vaughn's Congressional representatives asking that they 1) Write to General

Christman asking for clemency on her behalf; 2) Support legislation that Rep. Ron Dellums will be introducing to clarify the existing conscientious objection procedures and to offer a review process to COs unjustly treated during the Gulf War.

Dr. Huet-Vaughn's Congressional representatives are: Sen. Christopher Bond (R), 293 Russell Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510-2503; Sen. John Danforth (R), 249 Russell Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510-2501 and Rep. Alan Wheat (D), 1210 Longworth Building, Washington, DC 20515.

Crossfire Review

Continued from page 12

sources and (tracing back when necessary) evaluating their pedigrees." In a work such as this, Marris states under "Sources and Notes," "extensive footnoting within the text can often impede the flow of ideas, reducing comprehension." That is nonsense. Small numbers in a text leading to reference notes which state the source of a proffered fact facilitate the flow of ideas by enabling skeptical readers (and on this subject, who is not a skeptical reader?) to test the quality of the fact. Is this a hard fact? Is this only an arguable intuition? Is that just what somebody who is prejudiced or careless said was true without any or adequate proof? It is the **absence** of sourcing which reduces comprehension, by justifying skepticism.

"Major statements in this work or ones that contradict the official version of the assassination are attributed," Marris explains. In other words, the sources of "minor" statements or those that fall within "the official version" are not given. He continues: "Any statements without attribution or a source listing indicate historical fact or issues which are undisputed among the majority of credible assassination researchers." Who judges their credibility? Marris of course. But I for one sharply disagree with him concerning the credibility of Mark Lane; although I may come to be, I for one am not convinced, as Marris is, that Jim Garrison, the hero of Oliver Stone's new movie based on

Garrison's and Marris' books, is an acceptably credible source. Others who are well-informed will have other judgments concerning different researchers. Yet I estimate that Marris has failed to specify his sources for 80 percent or 90 percent of the facts he has presented, many of them highly arguable. Who can know how many of them come from sources some of us would not deem to be *per se* credible?

By his scanty scurrying Marris has fundamentally reduced the credibility and utility of his otherwise stimulating and useful book. I judge that, unless Marris himself was kind enough to provide a fully-footnoted manuscript of his book, it would take me at least six months' reading and work, and perhaps six years', to find and evaluate all of the sources of all of the salient points which he discusses.

Marris' work is subject, also, to the complaint that he casts suspicion on so many groups and so many individuals, he appears to be positing a conspiracy too large to be credible. I am not sure that this complaint would be granted in light of the profundity and the magnitude of federal crimes and lies to which the nation has been subjected in the period since the assassination, but it certainly has some force. For who, per Marris, are "the men and organizations considered most likely to have been involved in a plot against the President"? "Many assassination researchers believe" that organized crime was responsible, but if so, the mob bosses "may have received some assurances of protection before the fact." Not the CIA as an organization, but "persons within the CIA may have played

roles in an assassination conspiracy." [Most researchers today...regard certain agents within both the FBI and the Secret Service as prime suspects in the plot to kill Kennedy.] And, "...many assassination researchers believe that at least some members of the U.S. military have played a role in an assassination conspiracy."

Mired in Doubt

Finally we are forced to think through fundamental questions that are deeply disturbing. All our life is finding our way through ambiguous and frequently deceptive reality. We pay close attention to the quality of what we take to be the facts of reality so that we will be as sound as we can in opinion and in action. Walking barefooted in a strange house in a lightless night, walking in the dark outside in the marsh, the swamp of felt objects and milky shadows, where are we going, what are we doing? Even if we attain the ability to think and act wisely, the course we take depends on the quality of the evidence we accept about the reality we are in. As a nation we are still mired in a deep doubt about the reality of our collective life since November 22, 1963. That was when began the long national hallucination from which we cannot seem to escape. In the very garishness of this hallucination a pervasive suspicion has taken root and has begun to spread that we are governed, not by ourselves in a democracy, but by liars and killers in a military state rooted in unscrupulous violence for which the term "the national security state" is merely a euphemism.

A photograph of Jack Ruby is blocked out on the cover my paperback copy of *Crossfire* by a pasted-on gold-colored star that is imprinted with the words, "Soon to be a major motion picture from Oliver Stone." We cannot say that Jim Marris' theory of the conspiracy behind the assassination is true or that it is false because it may turn out to be either. If, say, the Mob, but not the government, turns out to be guilty, or persons in a government agency, but not in other suspected agencies or the Mob, Marris can turn out to be right but mostly wrong. A jury acquitted the man Jim Garrison accused of complicity in Kennedy's murder. Yet Stone, using the books by Garrison and Marris as his foundation, has made his movie, and many of us will go see it. What the people of the United States and the rest of the world are being given now in the movie houses is theory as entertainment and entertainment as history.

Whose fault is this? It is not the people's, it is not the assassination researchers' and it is not Oliver Stone's. It is the fault of the liars and the withholders in the federal government. Nothing can cleanse our country of the black 26-volume lie but the flinging open of the government's files on this case and a President who will initiate, from the point of zero, a new and fully-funded historical inquest.

Unless we get that, our long national hallucination will continue.

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